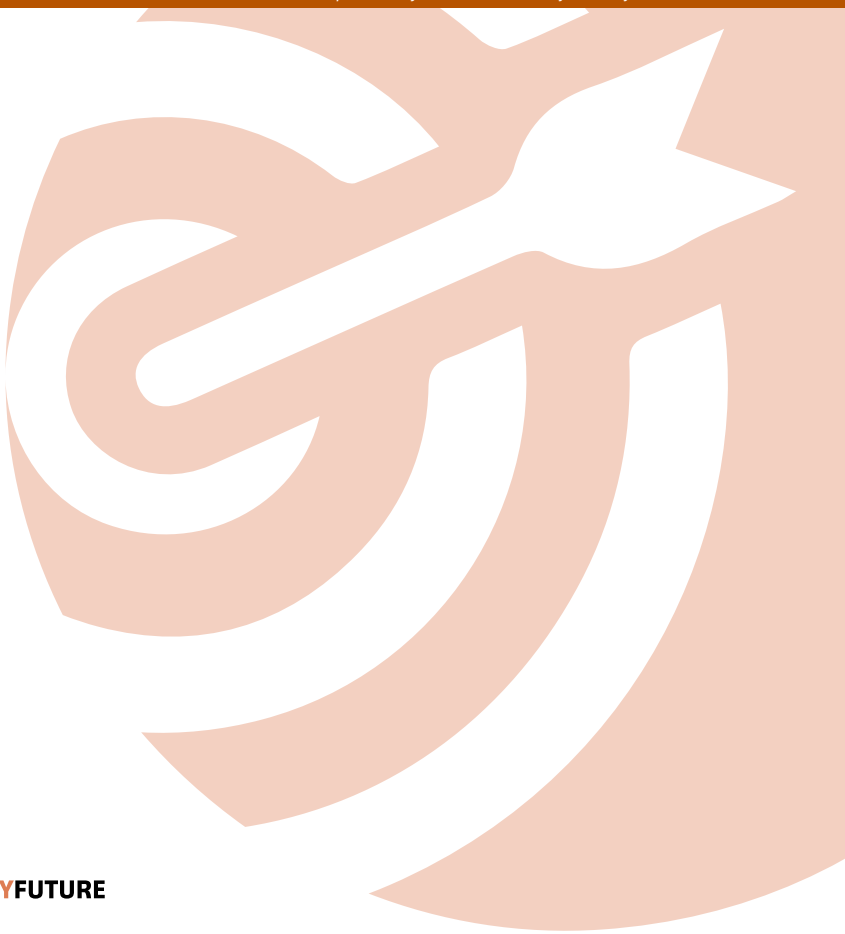

MYFUTURE

My Future: Developing career education and guidance at school

Research to support the development of teacher training and guidance

Nicki Moore and Jill Hanson
International Centre for Guidance Studies, University of Derby

This is one of the products
of an Erasmus + funded project titled:
My Future: Developing career education and guidance at school
Research to support the development of teacher training and guidance

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Erasmus+

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UNIVERSITY
of DERBY
International Centre for
Guidance Studies (iCeGS)


MYFUTURE

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Introduction

Recent changes in the nature of work, access to education and the labour market across Europe has led to career guidance becoming an important consideration for policy makers. Career guidance is important for individuals, for society and the economy as a whole; it plays a key role in helping education fulfil its aims, it supports labour markets and it facilitates social inclusion and mobility. The Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (2003) report evidence that social mobility is the result of development of a wider understanding of knowledge, skills and how to use them. However, lifelong career guidance has a wider role to play as it provides a range of interventions that help an individual to manage their life, learning and work. The European Lifelong Guidance Policy Network (ELGPN) Resource Kit identifies the key public policy areas to which lifelong guidance can contribute:

- Efficient investment in education and training.
- Labour market efficiency.
- Lifelong learning.
- Social inclusion.
- Social equity.
- Economic development
- Active ageing.
- Active labour markets.
- Effective skills utilisation.
- Employee engagement.
- Labour market flexibility/flexicurity.
- Participation in vocational and higher education.
- Addressing youth transitions and unemployment.
- Supporting and enabling European mobility for learning and work.

The ELGPN has played a vital role in encouraging the European Council of Ministers of Education (2004, 2008) to adopt the findings from a number of reviews of life long guidance and how that might be developed strategically. Emphasis has been placed onto four main areas (Sultana, 2012):

1. The lifelong acquisition of career management skills
2. The facilitation of access by all citizens to guidance services
3. The ensuring of quality in guidance provision
4. The encouragement of coordination and cooperation among the various national, regional and local stakeholders

Despite this emphasis on the importance of career guidance, Europe continues to struggle with a skills shortage (European Commission, 2016):

> *"Yet the situation in Europe calls for action. 70 million Europeans lack adequate reading and writing skills, and even more have poor numeracy and digital skills, putting them at risk of unemployment, poverty and social exclusion. More than half of the 12 million long-term unemployed are considered as low-skilled….. Skills gaps*

and mismatches are striking. Many people work in jobs that do not match their talents. At the same time, 40% of European employers have difficulty finding people with the skills they need to grow and innovate. Education providers on the one hand and employers and learners on the other have different perceptions of how well-prepared graduates are for the labour market. Too few people have the entrepreneurial mind-sets and skills needed to set up their own business." (European Commission, 2016, p. 2)

Making high quality career guidance available to every young person remains a priority.

This document sets out the findings of research undertaken by five partners through the Erasmus Plus programme:

- The University of Camerino (Italy): Lead partner
- Regione Marche (Italy)
- Centre Studi Pluriversum (Italy)
- The University of Derby (United Kingdom)
- Hertfordshire County Council (United Kingdom)
- UU-Lillebælt (Denmark)
- University of Malta
- CMBRAE Bucuresti (Romania)

Project website: http://myfutureproject.ue/

The research sought to identify and critically evaluate career guidance frameworks and practice with young people aged 12 – 25 across Europe with particular focus on:

- Social inclusion and mobility
- Career Management Skills (CMS)
- Use of technology
- How geographical context influences practice and outcomes

This report in conjunction with a new quality framework for delivering career guidance in schools, will be the foundation of a new web-based resource which will help teachers in schools across Europe to develop their provision in response to these issues. Throughout the report, the chapters are cross-referenced to the framework to allow a consistent read across and to inform the development of training and development programmes.

Terminology used in this report

To bring clarity and a shared meaning to this project, the following definitions of terms and elements of career guidance have been adopted:

- **Career guidance** is an *umbrella* term which describes a range of activities which support people to make and implement career decisions. UDACE produced a list of seven activities (UDACE 1986) to help define guidance including information; advice; coaching; education:
- **Careers education** is the delivery of learning about careers as part of the curriculum. Careers education is often closely related to work-experience and other forms of work-related learning
- **Careers information** is the provision of information and resources about courses, occupations and career paths.
- **Careers advice** is more in-depth explanation of information and how to access and use information
- **Career coaching** (also referred to as personal career guidance in some EU countries) - a formal definition from the International Federation of Coaching (ICF) states that a career coach partners with you in a thought-provoking and creative process that inspires you to maximize your personal and professional potential. "It helps people to reflect on their ambitions, interests, qualifications and abilities. It helps them to understand the labour market and education systems, and to relate this to what they know about themselves. Comprehensive [career coaching] guidance tries to teach people to plan and make decisions about work and learning." (Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, 2004, p. 19).
- **Personal career guidance** refers to services intended to assist people, of any age and at any point throughout their lives to make educational, training and occupational choices and to manage their careers.
- **Career management skills** are competencies which help individuals to identify their existing skills, develop career learning goals and take action to enhance their careers.

Research approach

In developing a methodological approach for undertaking this research, the team agreed that a framework which had international application would be helpful. The framework needed to be simple to understand and useful in any international setting. The Gatsby Benchmarks (Gatsby Charitable Foundation 2014) offer such a framework. The Benchmarks were developed in 2014 after research into what 'good' career guidance looked like in countries around the world alongside an investigation into the provision in schools in the independent sector in England. The resulting Benchmarks identify different dimensions of good practice. The Benchmarks are:

1. A stable careers programme
2. Learning from career and labour market information
3. Addressing the needs of each pupil
4. Linking curriculum learning to careers
5. Encounters with employers and employees
6. Experiences of workplaces and work-related learning providers
7. Encounters with further and higher education
8. Personal guidance

The language of the Gatsby Benchmarks are used through this report and are used to categorise the research findings.

Method

The research used a mixed methods approach of inter-related activities delivered by all project partners. A detailed description of the methodological approach can be found in **Appendix 1**. The following diagram illustrates the approach taken.

Figure 1: Research approach

Local focus groups

Each partner conducted two local focus groups (one with students and one with teachers and guidance practitioners) to collect information, needs, experiences and proposals on career choices and career guidance provision. Each partner then produced detailed notes from each focus group which were then collated and analysed thematically. Information about the focus group participants can be found in appendix 1.

Online survey

A survey for career development practitioners was designed in Google forms in English. The English survey was translated into Italian and Romanian for respondents from those countries. Malta and Denmark disseminated the survey in English. The results were downloaded from Google Forms into an excel spreadsheet and analysed. In total 205 responded to the survey, and of this number 199 were valid responses. A further 12 responses were received after the closing date and after the present analysis was conducted so have not been included here.

Appendix 1 provides demographic data about the survey respondents. It is important to note that two partners are from England and there are therefore a greater proportion of responses from England.

The survey data is presented throughout the report in relevant sections.

Reporting

The University of Derby collated the data provided by each partner and provided an overview analysis and report. This was shared with partners in draft format at a partners meeting in Malta in November 2017 where feedback was gathered and subsequent iterations made.

Research findings

This section sets out the findings from both the qualitative and quantitative research. The findings are organised using the framework of the Gatsby Benchmarks (Gatsby Charitable Foundation 2014) which offer a simple but effective approach to reviewing good practice in school based career guidance provision (Moore *et al* 2017). The data has been set out by participating country so that a comparison can be made.

The delivery of career guidance

Benchmark 1: A stable careers programme (MYFUTURE framework 2)

> *Every school and college should have an embedded programme of career education and guidance that is known and understood by pupils, parents, teachers, governors and employers.*

This Benchmark suggests that good quality career guidance can be demonstrated when every school and college have a well-managed and embedded programme of career education and guidance that is known and understood by pupils, parents, teachers, governors and employers. Good career programmes in schools are associated with a number of positive outcomes: Improved retention and attainment rates, improved ability of students to transition from school to further/higher education, training or employment and improved longer-term career success (Hooley, Marriot & Sampson, 2011). Lapan, Gysbers, & Sun (1997) for example found that schools where comprehensive careers programmes were fully implemented had students who reported higher grades. Morris, Rudd, Nelson & Davies (2000) examined career guidance practice in 30 English schools and were able to demonstrate that good career guidance brought about reduced drop-out rates.

Holman (The Gatsby Charitable Foundation 2014) states that good career guidance programmes depend on the effective management and co-ordination of:

- formal and informal curriculum interventions
- experiential learning
- the provision of information in a range of formats, and
- personal career guidance delivered by internal and external providers

These activities should range across the whole school; the careers programme needs to be comprehensive, integrated and combine a number of approaches together in a meaningful way (Christensen & Søgaard Larsen, 2011; Hooley, Marriott, Watts & Coffait, 2012; Holman, 2014; Janeiro, Mota & Ribas, 2014).

A stable careers programme also requires strong senior leadership and strategic vision and oversight (Gatsby Charitable Foundation, 2014). Strong leadership is needed to:

- produce a clearly articulated policy and development planning process
- champion the programme and draw all staff into the programme in one role or another

- embed it into school structures
- oversee its delivery
- ensure the necessary financial and human resources are provided
- ensure that it is properly monitored (i.e. asking whether things are being *done right*), reviewed and evaluated (i.e. asking whether the *right things* are being done) (Morris, Rudd, Nelson & Davies, 2000; Holman, 2014).

What does this look like in practice?

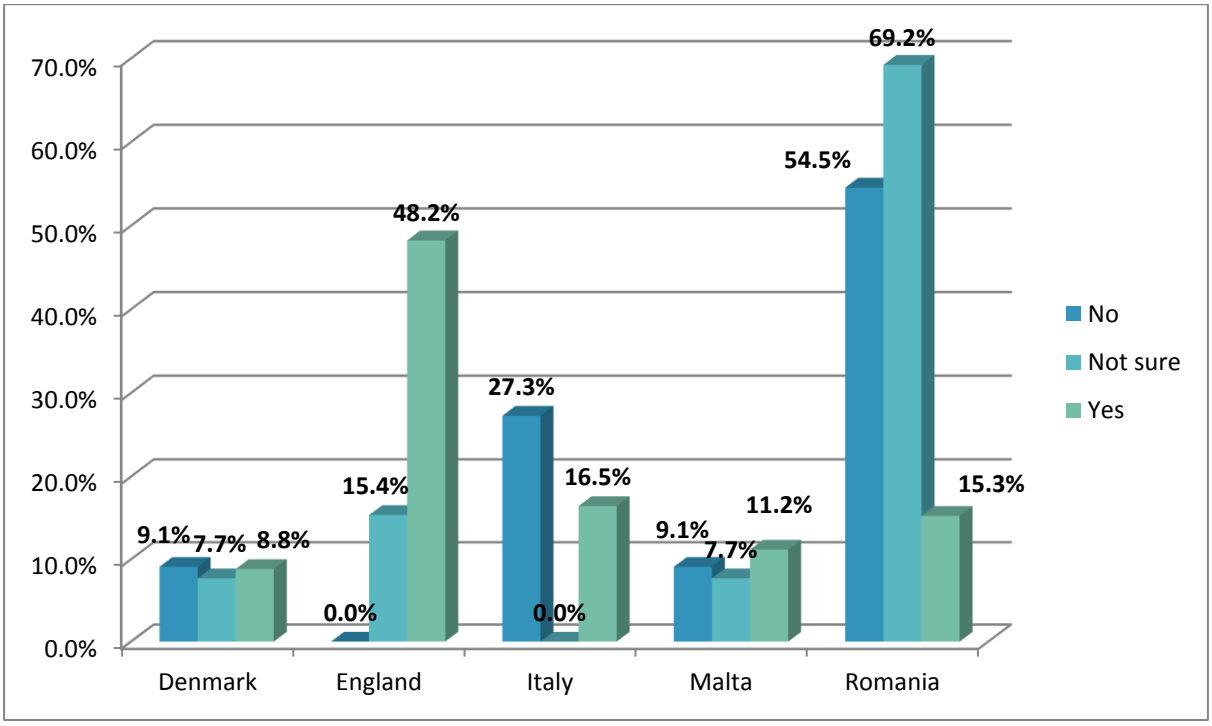
Schools with good practice tend to have identified roles within the hierarchy that have responsibility for career guidance management and include succession planning so that the programme will remain stable should members of staff leave (Moore *et al*., 2017). Strong leadership in career guidance is also typically manifested not just through members of the senior leadership team (SLT) but also through governance, with schools exemplifying good practice having at least one named governor who has an overview of careers guidance (Moore et al, 2017).

Monitoring, reviewing and evaluating are essential for an effective careers programme – it means that careers provision can be integrated into strategy and provides a platform for development and improvement. Moore et al (2017) report schools using similar processes to monitor, review and evaluate their career guidance provision as they do in other areas of the school which includes self-assessment against the Gatsby Benchmarks, feedback from stakeholders and the student voice.

Managing career guidance (MYFUTURE framework 2.2)

The majority of survey respondents (n=174) reported that a senior leader in their organisation had an overview of careers guidance compared to 11 who reported they did not (and 13 who were ‘not sure’). This response ratio was similar across countries (see Figure 2)

Figure 2: The extent to which a senior leader has an overview of careers guidance



In the majority of English state funded schools, career guidance is overseen by a senior leader or strategic manager and operational management is through a 'careers coordinator'. There is no single pattern of delivery, but rather a number of models in evidence:

- The careers co-ordinator is a qualified career development practitioner;
- The careers coordinator is a teacher who may or may not have undertaken additional training to provide operational management of careers work;
- The careers co-ordinator is from a different professional background such as the school librarian who may or may not have undertaken additional training.

There is a move to encourage all of those involved in the delivery of career guidance to undertake a programme of study leading to a qualification. The Career Development Institute (CDI) is the guardian of occupational standards for careers work across the UK and provide training programmes and events to support the professional development of the sectors workforce. The CDI have set out the variety of occupation roles and qualifications in the Career Development Progression Pathway

In Malta, career guidance in the education system is provided by two types of practitioners; guidance teachers and careers advisers who are often referred variously as:

- education officers (Education support services),
- principal education support practitioners
- senior education support practitioners
- education support practitioners

Career guidance services are part of a range of psychosocial services that fall under the remit of a service manager (Debono, 2017). The careers advisor directly monitors the work of guidance teachers, who in turn, support the initiatives of careers advisers and carry out personal and career guidance interventions. Although guidance teachers typically also have teaching duties, a group of guidance teachers work exclusively on career guidance initiatives at national level, such as the Career Exposure Experience, in order to support the work done at college level (Debono, 2017). There are differences in the delivery of career guidance in state schools in Malta and in private / independent schools. In the latter, service delivery appears relatively autonomous and at the discretion of the particular school.

In Denmark**,** the career guidance system offers systematic guidance to young people. Three types of governmental centres offer career guidance which is independent of sectoral and institutional interests. When delivering career guidance workshops for young people the goal is to involve local companies and other key players in the activities.

The earmarked resources for career guidance is determined on a regular basis in negotiations between the state and the municipalities in Denmark. There is no actual program, but minimum standards are used for what the students should participate in and what they should learn. The individual municipalities have the opportunity to invest further in guidance if they see a need and can find the resources for it. It is the municipalities that administer the economy devoted to the area.

In Romania, career guidance is managed centrally through national policies and approaches, but also at local, institutional level. Elements of career guidance are evident through a variety of social support systems including in educational settings, in local public authorities' settings, in companies, and through social services.

There are 244 school counsellors in Bucharest and about 2300 school counsellors across Romania. The Ministry of Education manage career guidance with the ISE support (Institute of Education Sciences). At the local level, in every region of the country, counselling and guidance is coordinated by counselling centres- Municipal Centre of Resources and Educational Assistance (CMBRAE) in Bucharest and local school inspectorates. In addition, all teachers deliver guidance at a basic level as part of the teaching role.

School-based career guidance is overseen by a career guidance committee. The school counsellor and the class teachers are the persons who carry out counselling activities with students. Managing professional guidance is the responsibility of school project coordinators and school curricula or deputy directors.

Delivering career guidance (MYFUTURE framework 2.1)

Career guidance is delivered through a variety of interventions in each country.

In England, most students receive some careers guidance, delivered through a range of approaches including:

- personal, social and health education
- tutorial groups
- assemblies,
- presentations,
- employer visits,
- work experience,
- seminars and workshops, such as student finance road shows for students and parents
- suspended timetable days
- 1:1 sessions,
- careers fairs
- STEM careers events.

In Romania, career guidance is provided to students through individual and group sessions, special lessons, and during educational events. In schools, career guidance is usually delivered through the following activities:

- Career counselling classes and workshops
- Information about the high school network
- Psychological testing
- Visits to different workplaces
- Activities provided by external stakeholders from a variety of backgrounds

A basic level of career guidance is provided by all teachers through the organisation of extracurricular and educational activities and through weekly counselling and personal development sessions (Personal tutorials).

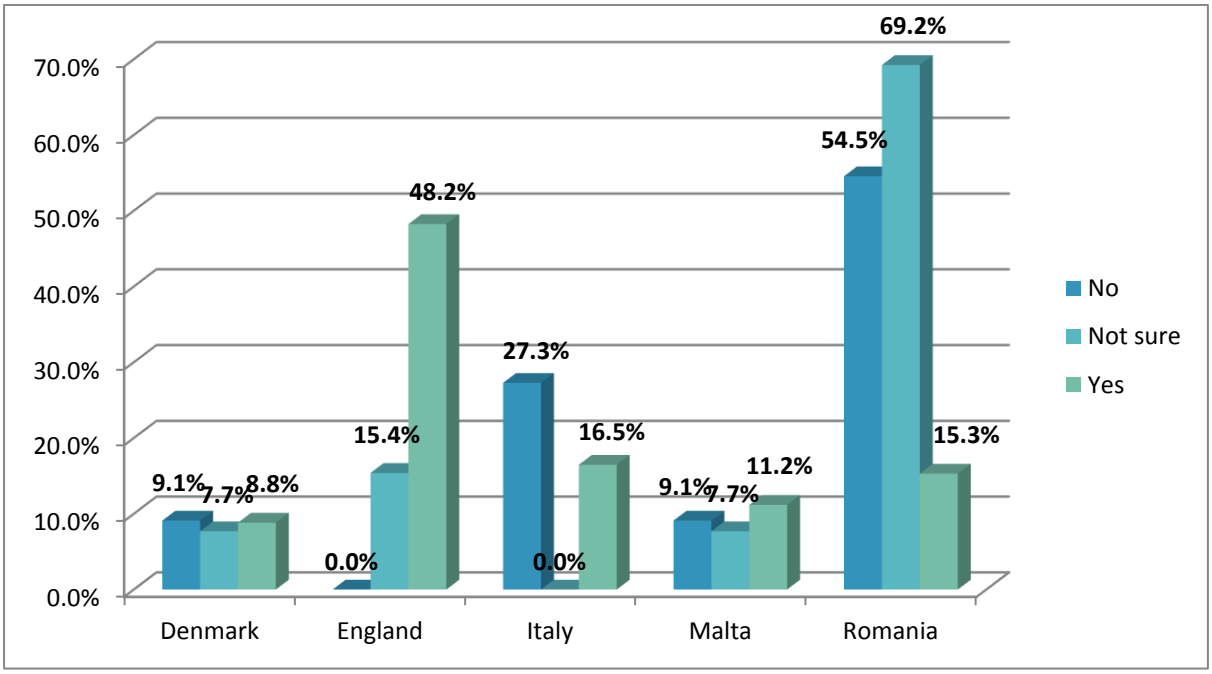
Specialist guidance counsellors are coordinated by Municipal/ County Centre of Resources and Educational Assistance (CMBRAE/CJRAE), a public institution, affiliated to school inspectorates. Career counselling is part of the psycho-pedagogical counselling provided in educational institutions by the psycho-pedagogical counsellors (school counsellors). These practitioners are specialists with psychological, pedagogical or sociological training/ background. Amongst their attributions they are involved in the personal development process of young people, counselling of children, parents and teachers and helping young people to learn and to properly develop in a school environment. The school counsellors also help children and young people to develop self-awareness in order to make better in order educational or career choices.

Italy published new national guidelines in 2015 on lifelong career guidance that delineate the functions and the organisation of career guidance nationally. In the Italian school system, career guidance activities are mainly concentrated towards transition phases between educational steps (between first grade and second grade secondary school) or between education and the world of work:

Resources for career guidance (MYFUTURE framework 5)

Career guidance is more likely to have its own separate budget in England, particularly compared to Malta and Romania where very few respondents reported this to be the case. Italy and Denmark showed a more even split between those reporting yes and no to this item (Figure 3).

Figure 3: Is there a separate budget for career guidance in your organisation?



In English state schools, career coordinators are provided with a budget to deliver career guidance. It is difficult to determine the exact level of funding because each school has different formulae for allocating funds. In some schools the careers budget includes travel and transport for visits to work placements or to commission independent career guidance. In other schools these funds are taken from different budget streams. In the schools used in the research the average was £10,000 – £20,000 (equivalent to €11,325 – €22,650)

In Malta, the budget allocated for staff salaries is managed by the Ministry for Education and Employment (MEDE). The MEDE also funds certain national events such as the *"I Choose Event"* (a post-secondary fair) which has been organised for the past 3 years.

With respect to career guidance services in secondary schools, there is no specific budget allocated by MEDE or by the school. However, it may be the case that schools allocate some funds for specific guidance initiatives such as the setting up of career rooms, printing of option booklets and other resources needed for in-house provision of career guidance.

In Romania**,** individual institutions have their own budgets. School counsellors operate in educational institutions (schools, kindergartens, high schools, vocational) but they are paid through by local Councils who allocate budgets to individual schools. This is managed by

managers of the local centres. In addition, schools can provide resources to support counselling activities. The resources and materials required to deliver guidance and counselling is provided by schools. This has led to a situation where, in many cases, counselling offices are not properly equipped (material resources, electronics, current logistics) because there is no annual budget to support the provision. There is no obligation of schools to provide material/logistic resources for counselling offices and this is not available through the regional or council structures.

In Italy, career guidance actions are mainly supported by public projects funded by the Minister of Education, University and Research (MIUR), regional and local governments, and private foundations. Learning at workplace experiences are funded by specific grants by MIUR given to each school.

Examples include a project called “Obiettivo Piemonte” that consists in a two-year program aimed at identifying the model of regional governance on career guidance for young people aged 11 to 22. The project also offers a presence in the regional offices and proposes a collaboration between career guidance experts and schools to plan school-based career guidance activities.

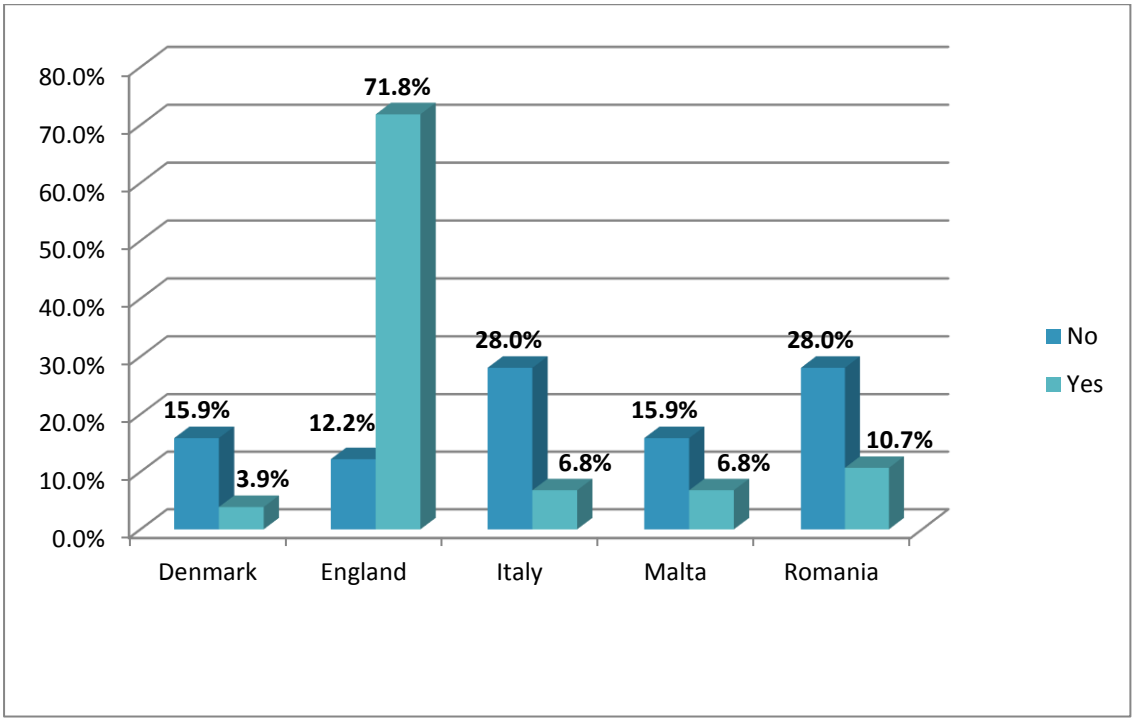
Policy or strategy (MYFUTURE framework 5)

Nearly 70% of survey respondents reported that their organisation had a formal policy for career guidance (n = 138); only 5.6% reported they did not (n = 11) and 9.1% reported they were unsure (n = 18). Thirty-one respondents (all from the Italian sample) did not complete this question.

By country we can see from Figure 4 that organisations were more likely than not to hold a formal career guidance policy, and this was true for all countries (except Italy for which we have no data).

Most English state schools set out the scope of their career guidance provision in a school policy which is usually held on the schools’ website and is accessible to external stakeholders such as parents and local employers. The senior leader with responsibility for career guidance will initiate an annual review of the policy and this is ratified by the schools governing body. Consultation with internal and external stakeholders is a regular occurrence. The policy describes the ethos and purpose of careers work in schools and the content of the programme. The policy also indicates the roles and responsibilities of all individuals involved in delivering.

Figure 4: Is there an organisational policy for career guidance?



In Malta, every college has a scholastic yearly plan and careers advisers have to outline the activities planned for the upcoming scholastic year. Certain initiatives are implemented across all colleges while certain initiatives are specific to the particular school. One careers adviser noted the importance of *"educating our bosses"* since at times no distinction between career guidance, careers education and career information is made by institutional decision-makers. There appears to have been a positive change in the way school leavers are prepared for entry into the labour market. One participant from Jobsplus noted that the strategy adopted by the educational sector over the last decade seems to be resulting in positive outcomes since the young adults (16 - 24 years) making use of the employment services at Jobsplus seem to be better equipped for the school to work transition. It was noted that this was however, quite erratic.

In Romania, there is a national policy for career guidance with regulations and operating rules. The Ministry of Education and the Institute of Education Sciences sets out policies in counselling and guidance in schools.

In Romanian schools, career guidance is just a part of the work of a school counsellor. Other work carried out by the counsellors includes:

- the prevention of school failure, dropout and juvenile deviance;
- the promotion of a healthy life style and wellbeing;
- the development of interests, attitudes, personal qualities of students;
- the development of career decision making skills;
- intercultural understanding;

- personal development of students, parents and teachers;
- the development of partnerships between school, family and community;
- the development of educational programs and projects; and
- the improvement of educational activities of teachers.

Monitoring review and evaluation (MYFUTURE framework 5)

English state schools use a variety of approaches to evaluate their career guidance provision, such as surveys and questionnaires for young people, verbal feedback from young people and parents who attend appointments, and feedback from teaching staff. Schools regularly use destination information to review their careers programmes. There is an increasing use of an online self-assessment and review tool called 'Compass' (See below in the section on quality frameworks) which has been produced by the Careers and Enterprise Company. This tool is based on the Gatsby Benchmarks (Gatsby Charitable Foundation 2014).

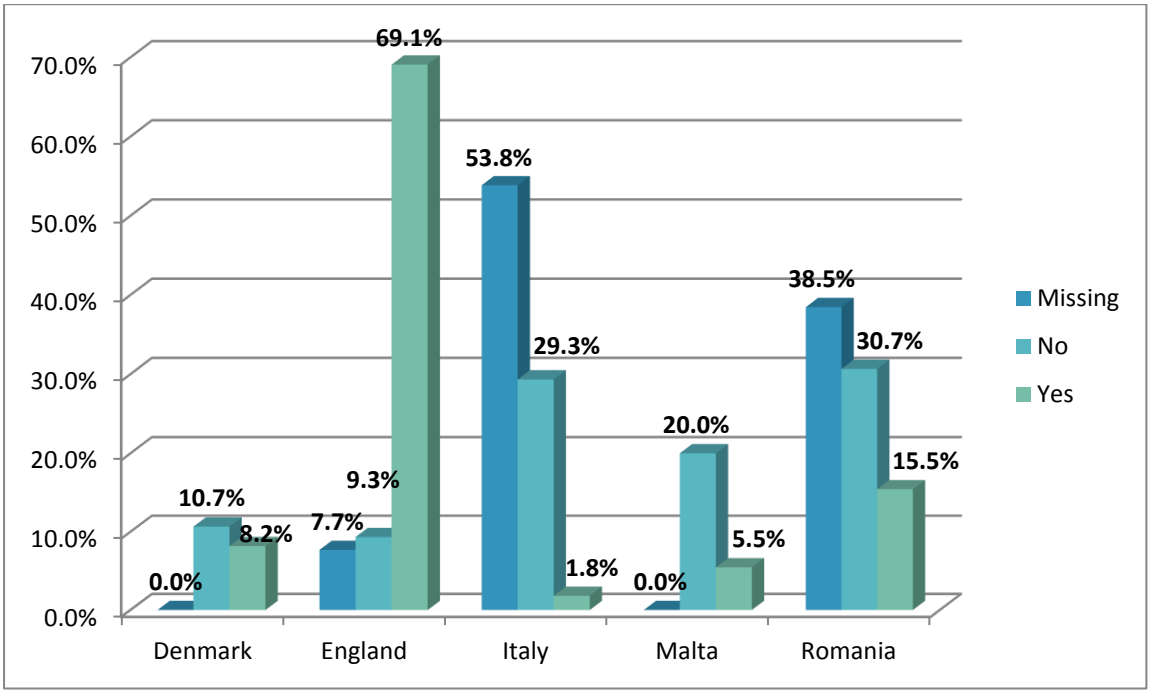
In Malta, feedback is regularly sought from students but this erratic and at the discretion of individual institutions. Evaluation forms or client satisfaction surveys are the most regular method of seeking feedback after interventions have taken place. A number of quality indicators are used to inform development in the service including the monitoring of student attitudes to career guidance through the engagement in career development activities and destination and progression data

In Romania, career guidance is evaluated in several ways. Firstly, through impact measures using an analysis of personal report, peer evaluation, monitoring and beneficiaries' satisfaction. Secondly management information is used to examine the number and scope of interventions. At the end of the school year all counsellors draw up activity reports which set out the number of activities they have completed.

Quality frameworks (MYFUTURE framework 5)

The use of quality frameworks amongst survey participants shows a mixed picture. More participants (113) reported that they did use a quality framework or standards of quality to guide their own personal career guidance practice compared to 76 who reported they did not. England showed a marked difference to the other countries on this variable – 69% of the respondents from England stated they used a framework/set of standards compared to 9% who did not where as in all other countries more respondents stated they did not compared to those who did (Figure 5).

Figure 5: Is there use of a quality framework or standards to guide individual practice?



At the organisational level, 106 respondents stated their organisation's career guidance provision used a quality framework or standards of quality compared to 91 who stated it did not. Again, England is markedly different to the other countries who more often stated their organisation did not use a quality framework or set of standards (see Figure 4). With respect to managing quality of career guidance at a local level, the majority of respondents (n=74, 37.4%) stated this was done within the organisation but not on a wider level within the region. Sixty-nine (34.8%) stated there were no systems for managing career guidance at the local level. However, 31 respondents (15.5%) stated that not only was career guidance quality monitored within the organisation, it was also monitored at a regional level and 17 (8.6%) respondents stated it was monitored by practitioners at a regional level (Table 1).

Table 1: Local level management of the quality of career guidance

Management of quality at a local level	Frequency	%
Practitioners in our **locality** meet together and decide on the quality of our service and this is monitored at a **regional** level	17	8.6
Practitioners in our **organisation** meet together and decide on the quality of our service and then monitor this	74	37.4
Practitioners in our **organisation** meet together and decide on the quality of our service and then monitor this, Practitioners in our **locality** meet together and decide on the quality of our service and this is monitored at a **regional** level	31	15.5
We don't have any systems for managing quality in career guidance at a local level	69	34.8

Figure 6: Local level management of the quality of career guidance by country

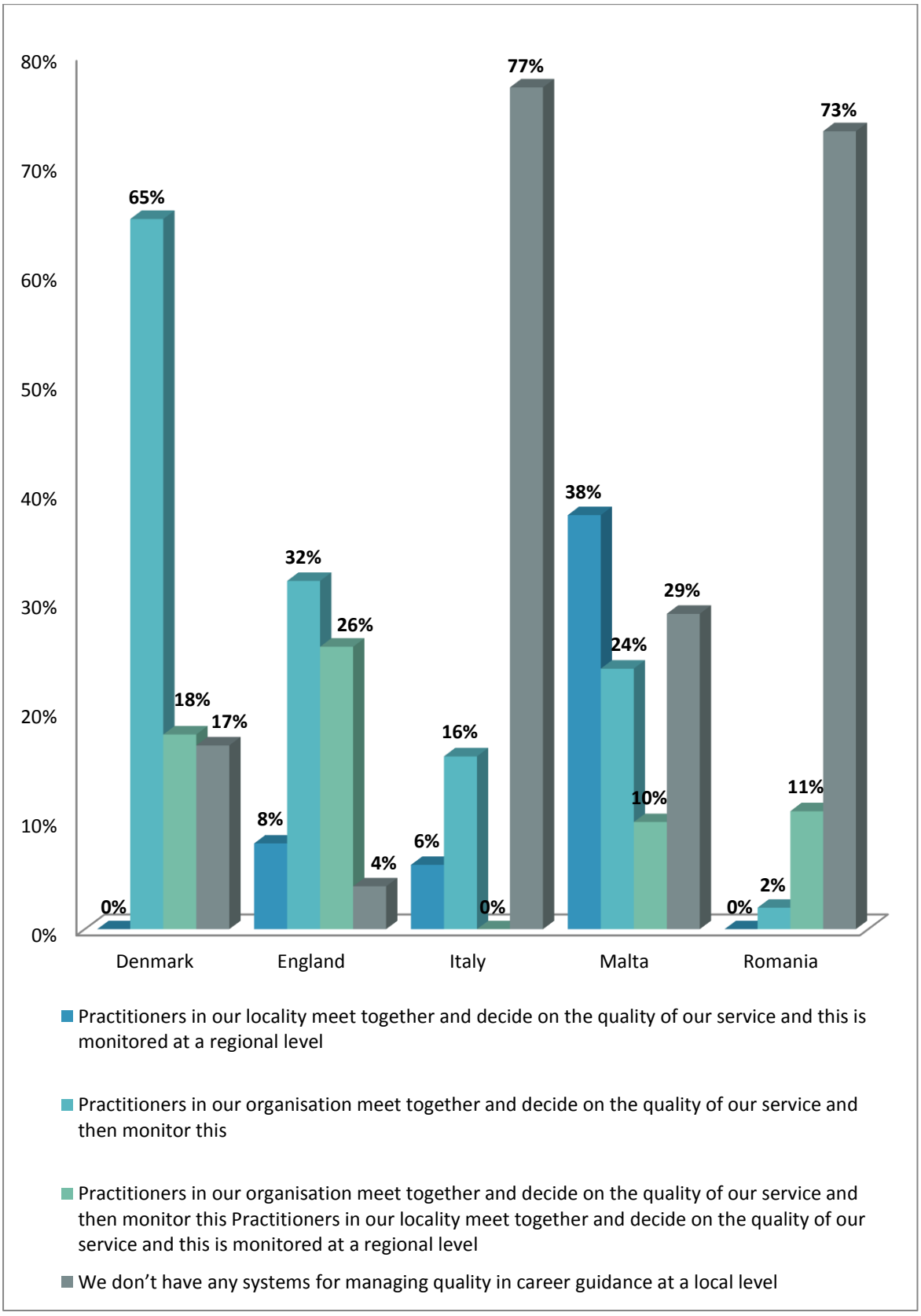
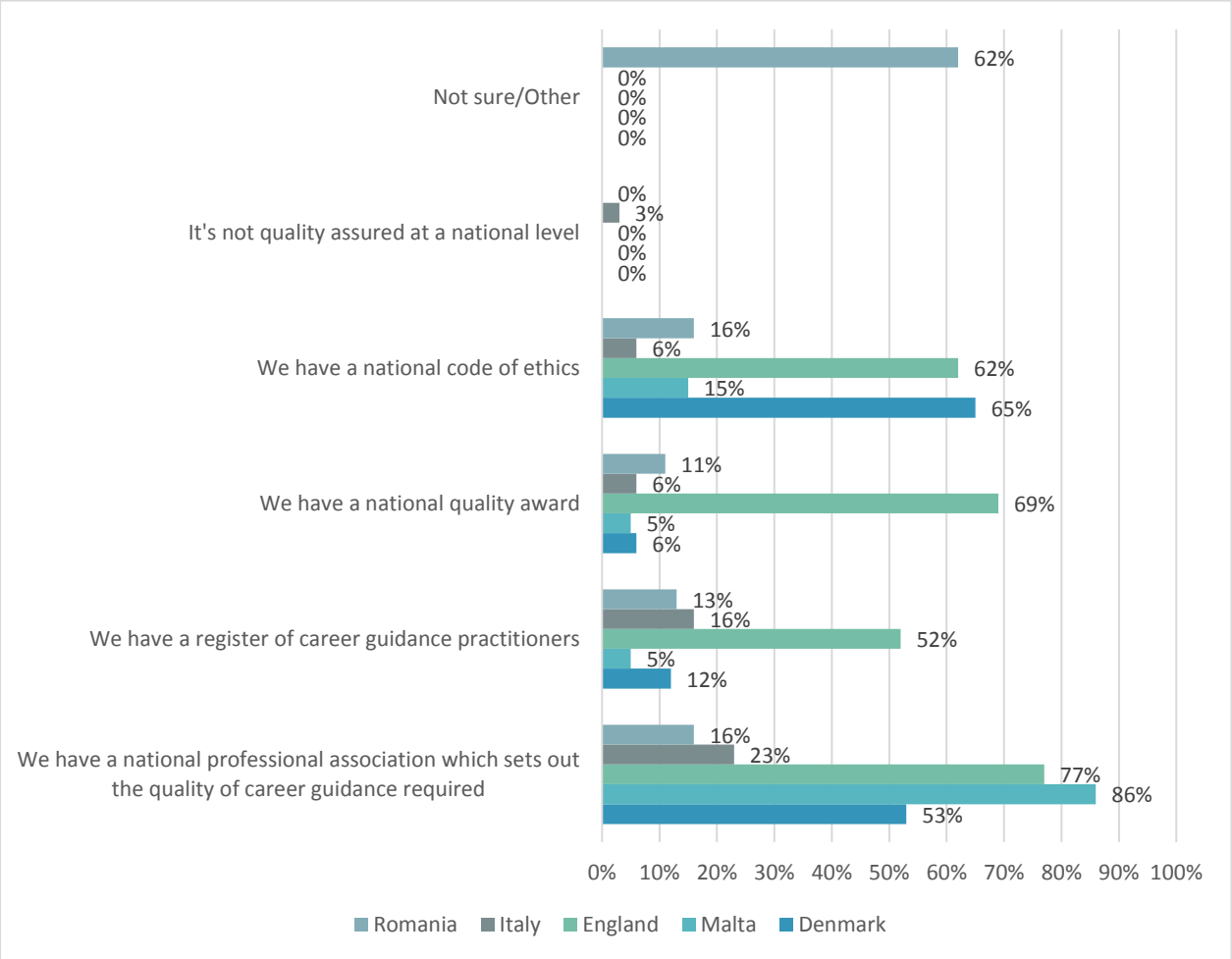


Figure 6 shows that Romania and Italy recorded the greatest percentage of responses regarding not having systems in place at a regional level for quality management (3%). England was the country most likely to have individuals monitoring at their organisation (71.8%) as was Demark (65%) but Malta indicated greater percentages of practitioners meeting at a local level (38%).

Respondents from England stated the greatest number of national level mechanisms for managing quality of career guidance (See Figure 7) with 50% of participants each stating that there was a national code of ethics, a national quality award, a register of carer guidance practitioners and a national professional association setting out standards. There was variability amongst respondents from Italy with 1/3 of respondents stating that there was no system in place but at least 2 individuals stating each that there was a national award, a national code of ethics, a national register and a national professional association. In Denmark 53% respondents noted a national professional association (n=9) and 65% a national code of ethics (n = 11) whilst 12%were aware of a national register and one individual was aware of a national quality award. In Romania many respondents, 62% (n = 28) were not sure about national level quality systems but 7 reported there was a national professional association, 16% noted a national register, 11% noted a quality award and 16% a national code of ethics.

Figure 7: National level quality management by country



In England, the Education Act 2011 and subsequent statutory guidance[1] place a duty on all state-funded secondary schools, including academies and free schools, to 'secure access to independent [from the school] careers guidance' for their pupils aged 13-18 and on FE Colleges and Sixth Form Colleges for students aged 16-18. Specifically, the duty requires governing bodies to ensure that all registered pupils at the school are provided with independent careers guidance from year 8 (12-13 year olds) to year 13 (17-18 year olds). The governing body must ensure that the independent careers guidance provided:

- is presented in an impartial manner;
- includes information on the range of education or training options, including apprenticeships and other vocational pathways; and
- will promote the best interests of the pupils to whom it is given.

The Department for Education sets out the requirements for post-16 education providers to include work experience when delivering 16-19 study programs in non-statutory advice.

Subsequently, the government's careers strategy[2] and related statutory guidance[3] for schools has reinforced the need for schools to address career guidance and the Gatsby Benchmarks are integral to achieving this vision.

The Gatsby Benchmarks were developed in 2014 (Gatsby Charitable Foundation 2014) after research into what 'good' career guidance looked like in countries around the world alongside an investigation into the provision in schools in the independent sector in England. In addition, the research team studied the available literature on career guidance in state schools and consulted with key stakeholders. The resulting Benchmarks identify different dimensions of good practice. The Benchmarks are:

1. A stable careers programme
2. Learning from career and labour market information
3. Addressing the needs of each pupil
4. Linking curriculum learning to careers
5. Encounters with employers and employees
6. Experiences of workplaces and work-related learning providers
7. Encounters with further and higher education
8. Personal guidance

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1 DFE (2018). Careers guidance and access for education and training providers Statutory guidance for governing bodies, school leaders and school staff

2 Department for Education (2017). Careers Strategy: Making the most of everyone's talents. London. DFE

3 Department for Education (2018). Careers guidance and access for education and training providers. Statutory guidance for governing bodies, school leaders and school staff. London. DFE

The Careers and Enterprise Company is a government funded organisation which is tasked with improving the quality of career guidance and enterprise education in English schools. It is the host for the national self-assessment tool for career development programmes 'Compass' which is free to use. The Careers and Enterprise Company collate the data from this exercise and report on the 'State of the Nation' in terms of the quality of career guidance using the Gatsby Benchmarks of good career guidance.

In England, the Quality in Careers Standard (QiCS) is the national standard and award for programmes of careers education and guidance. Independent research has found that on average schools which hold QiCS awards have better attendance, attainment and progression than equivalent schools (Hooley, Matheson and Watts, 2015). The QiCS award is also well aligned with descriptions of good practice such as the Gatsby Benchmarks (Gatsby Charitable Foundation, 2014).

Some organisations use Matrix accreditation against the Matrix Standard. This award is used by organisations providing career development services in a variety of settings including vocational and tertiary educational settings, those providing apprenticeships and guidance service providers.

Although no such frameworks are currently being used in Malta, it should be noted that careers advisers are informed of the required quality standards and provided with guidelines for the different initiatives during monitoring/supervision sessions.

In Denmark, new legislation influences the quality of career guidance. For instance, when the Danish parliament decides that only certain young people are eligible to receive face-to-face career guidance, this legislation affects the quality of the career guidance on an individual level. Career guidance teams offer professional and skilled career guidance to as many service users as possible, however; the legislation influences what the team can offer. In other words, the need for more individual career guidance exits but the national political reality does not accommodate this need.

In Romania, there are no centrally determined national standards for school based career guidance.

In Italy, the importance of developing career management skills is recognised. Practitioners agree on the importance of high quality services but a common underlying framework to guide practice is not in place. Piemonte region offers a specific system of validation to which different institutions of career guidance need to refer. This system consists of quantitative measurements of data and on making sure that procedures of good practice are respected. New aspects to add to this system have been proposed and are now under revision (e.g. using criteria linked to impact of actions, investing in professional resources, etc.). This lack of consistency has led to some students feeling that they have not been offered a structured programme of career guidance. This is especially true for students in 4th grade as many of them reported that they do not yet know much about activities of career guidance. Some reported that they attended visits on work places and periods of internships in companies.

Barriers to the provision of good quality career guidance and counselling (MYFUTURE framework 5)

For English schools in urban areas there are lots of employers and choice. Schools in rural areas are isolated or limited on choice and mobility. For example, in one school involved in the research, young people have only one bus an hour, no train links and very limited choice of employers. This limits their understanding of the world of work and consequently their aspirations.

In Malta, there are gaps in the current infrastructure at national level. Efforts have been made to develop national career guidance resources however the outcomes were not successful due to the rapidly changing nature of the labour market and thus the corresponding changes in the information required. Additionally, for certain assessments (such as career tests) the costs are exorbitant due to Malta's economies of scale. The reliance on tools developed abroad is therefore important but these are expensive and not always relevant to local contexts. When external expertise is required to develop new resources (such as tracer studies), the tendering procedures tends to be lengthy and bureaucratic, thereby prolonging the process.

Similarly, there is lack of IT based applications and hardware due to the financial costs associated with these and the need to constantly update them. A lack of human resources to implement the use of such resources on a national scale also presents a barrier.

Resistance to the use of career guidance tools by some practitioners is also a barrier and can only be addressed through training and development activities aimed at addressing entrenched attitudes to the use of new applications and resources.

Other factors which impact on the delivery of quality career guidance in institutions include:

- The knowledge base and skillset of the practitioner and in particular that of guidance teachers (as opposed to Careers Advisors) who have little experience of the world of work
- A lack of training for staff in secondary schools
- A lack of involvement by parents / guardians
- Initiative overload
- Disengagement and apathy on the part of students

In Romania, the following are the chief barriers to delivering quality career guidance and counselling:

- Lack of financial resources for the purchase of tests and questionnaires (vocational, interests, skills, competencies and so)
- Large caseloads and competing priorities
- Poor or no ICT equipment or infrastructure
- A lack of qualified staff to provide counselling services
- A lack of opportunities

Many schools in disadvantaged areas have no or few resources for guidance, books, PC, internet access and other electronical equipment and without these it makes it difficult for counsellors to provide good quality activities. Further to this, in rural areas there are few opportunities for learners and therefore progression is limited.

Enablers for good quality career guidance and counselling (MYFUTURE framework 5)

In Malta, there appears to be a growing understanding that guidance teachers need to gain experience of the workplace and there is an increase in the provision of opportunities for Guidance Teachers to be exposed to direct experiences in industry.

In Romania, there are some national approaches that guide teachers and counsellors in their work. The guidance provides information on set timetables and activities to provide information on next steps to students in their final year. There are also national documents setting out the activity of school counsellors. There is not a compulsory national training for career counsellors working in schools, and there are no national quality standards for guidance in school.

The Ministry of Education had a project to fund computers and furniture for careers offices in 2006-2007. There has been no repeat of this. Support for provision is provided through the regional or council offices including training on the regulations, procedures, working methods/instruments and projects,

Summary

The research has revealed a variety of practices across the partners' countries in terms of management, resourcing, and delivery of career guidance in secondary schools.

The management of career guidance programmes in schools is different across partner countries. In the UK for example there is a recognition that the skills required to provide management and leadership for career guidance overlap but are distinctive to those required to deliver career guidance interventions. As such, training and development programmes are offered to those tasked with leading and managing programmes irrelevant of their backgrounds. There are no such distinctions in other partner countries and whilst it is possible to note that in many, career guidance practitioners enjoy considerable seniority in the organisations in which they work, taking control of issues of quality in the delivery of career guidance activities, there are no obvious training programmes to support them in developing strategies and policies, managing budgets and dealing with the necessary monitoring, review and evaluation activities required for such high level activities. This will be the case once the launch of a new quality framework has taken place. The framework raises the question of how practitioners can use action research methods to explore impact and areas for continuous development. This research has also noted that in many partner countries, practitioners work in services whose strategic and operational leadership are centralised. This removes the professional autonomy of practitioners and can lead to programmes which are not sufficiently responsive to client needs and local contexts.

Finally, the research has noted that across partners, schools in rural and isolated areas experience considerable disadvantage in resourcing and access to guidance and educational and employment opportunities. Of course, the latter are not an issue which this project can address however, practitioners will need to explore ways in which digital technology can help them overcome the disadvantages faced by young people in these areas to address the issues of social justice and social inequality.

Recommendations

1. Practitioners and those that have management responsibility for career guidance in schools need to understand and reflect on the knowledge, skills and attributes required to effectively manage school-based programmes of career guidance. This should result in a clearer identification of individual training needs and a programme of training and development to help equip them for their relevant roles.
2. Practitioners and managers will need to explore how the new quality framework can be used as a tool for the monitoring, review and evaluation of their programmes.
3. Practitioners and managers will need to explore the potential for using digital technology for addressing the disadvantage experienced by those in rural and isolated areas.

Implications for MYFUTURE training and development activities

New programmes will need to address:

- The management of career guidance programmes in secondary schools
- Using the quality framework to support monitoring, review and evaluation of school-based career programmes
- The application of new technology to address the inequalities experienced by young people in rural and isolated communities

Benchmark 2: Learning about career and labour market information (MYFUTURE framework 3 and 5)

Every pupil, and their parents, should have access to good quality information about future study options and labour market opportunities. They will need the support of an informed adviser to make best use of available information.

Career and labour market information (LMI) is an important element of good career guidance because it can facilitate social mobility by developing awareness of a much broader range of careers, raise aspirations and develop the knowledge of how to achieve those aspirations. It can also help young people and their parents better understand current labour market conditions in order to align aspirations with what is in demand. It is important that LMI is available at different levels, e.g. national and regional, and that it is kept up to date.

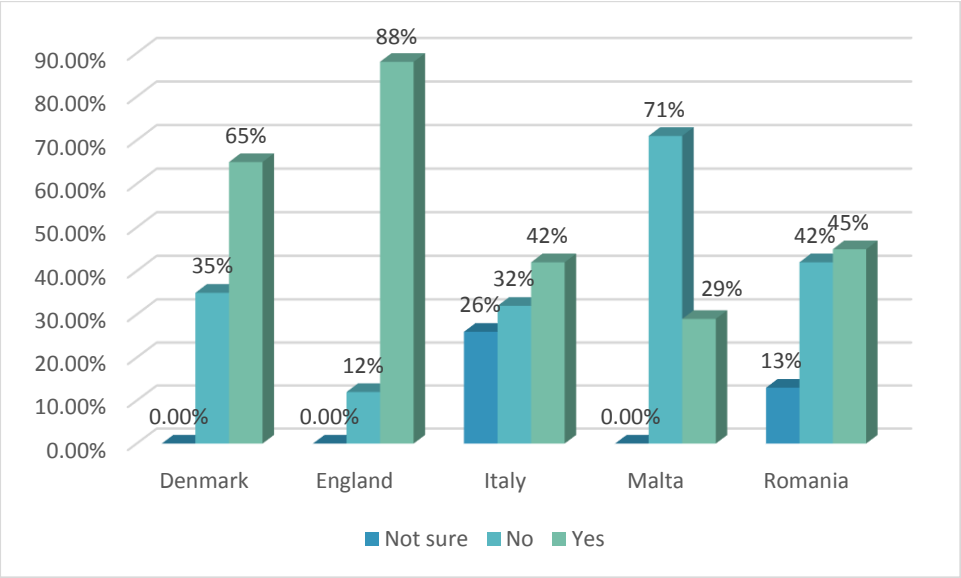
What does this look like in practice?

There are a variety of ways in which young people and their parents can access career and LMI including displays and posters, careers fairs, careers week, career focus days, assemblies, guest speakers and websites. Moore et al (2017) note that one key way schools have improved their career and LMI provision is by working collectively with other local schools – they pool, or collate, their resources and share these along with examples of good practice. Schools can also use commercial software packages to access career and LMI. One final avenue for schools to exploit are networks and alumni. Schools can set up alumni networks and manage these themselves but there are also organisations which can facilitate this. (Moore et al, 2017)

National web portals

Survey respondents were asked to state whether they had a national web portal for career guidance. There was some degree of confusion or lack of awareness regarding this across all countries (see Figure 8). More respondents than did not, stated there was one in their country (with the exception of Malta) but the fact that so many individuals either believed there was not or were not sure is concerning.

Figure 8: Is there a national web portal for career guidance?



In England there is no one approach to providing career and labour market information to young people. There are a number of nationally recognised websites which are most regularly used such as the Government funded National Careers Service site which provides information on jobs and progression routes as well as tools to assess career management skills and career guidance provided remotely through email. Some national websites are targeted to specific groups for example icould which has information for parents and teachers as well as video content linked to labour market information. This website also includes a quiz called the Buzz which matches young people to potential jobs based on Meyers-Briggs personality types. The National Apprenticeship Service website is another example of a specific website which has information about the apprenticeship scheme as well as vacancies.

In Malta there are some difficulties in maintaining up-to-date career and labour market information. Careers advisers are required as part of their roles to actively encourage students to access and use career and labour market as there is a reluctance by many students.

The Danish Ministry of Education provides a national Internet-based guidance portal. Teachers as well as career counsellors use the web portal actively. The portal is introduced to students during guidance sessions and to parents during parents' evenings. However only one of the six young people in the focus group used this website specifically. It appears that the web portal is useful when the young people are comparing specific information on different education options and not if the young person is in doubt. None of the young people used or were aware of the E-guidance offer.

Romanian schools have little access to careers libraries or web portals however counsellors, students and their parents do consult individual institutions websites for information on courses.

The web portals reported by survey participants were most typically aimed at multiple users (see Table 2) - learners, teachers, parents and career counsellors (n = 78). Twenty four percent reported the web portal was intended for use by a combination of teachers, career counsellors, parents and learners, 22% stated the portal was for use by learners and 14% for use by careers counsellors only.

In Malta, the majority of respondents (n=19, 90%) stated the portal was intended for career counsellors (although 2 respondents noted that a portal was for learners). In England, the web portals were typically intended for use by learners, teachers and career counsellors (n=57. 68%) with 9 (11%) stating the portal was for counsellors, 7 (8%) for learners and a small number saying the portal was for a range of different combinations of different users. In Denmark 8 respondents (47%) noted the portal was for all users, 7 for counsellors (41%) and 1 for learners. In Italy the portals mentioned were intended mostly for counsellors (n=17, 55%) with small numbers stating the portal was for varying combinations. In Romania, career counsellors, learners/career counsellors, and parents/teachers/career counsellors were the intended audiences as reported by 11 respondents each (24%). As with the other countries, parents appeared to be the least well supported users with respect to web portals.

Table 2: Web portals for career guidance and their intended users by country

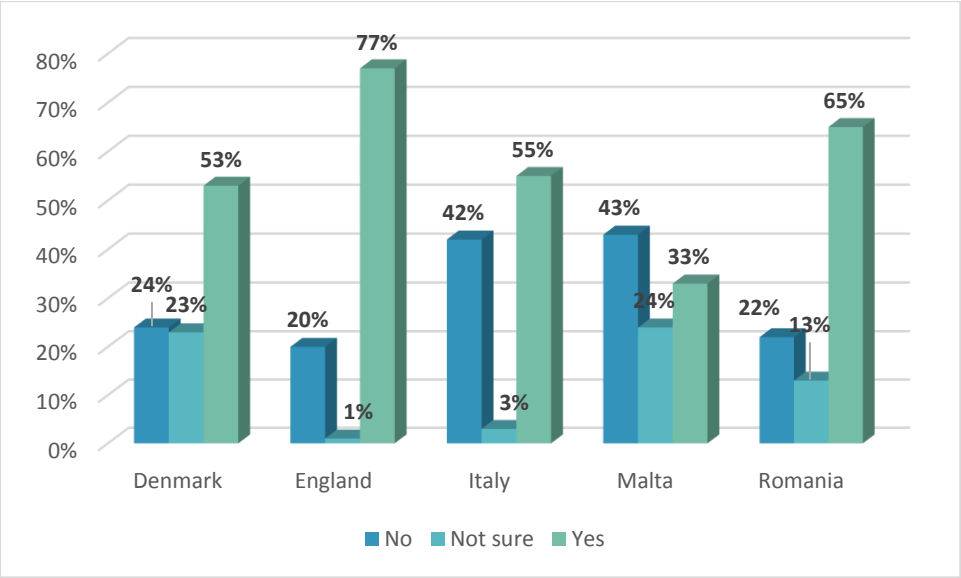
	Denmark	England	Italy	Malta	Romania
Career counsellors	7	9	17	19	11
Learners	1	7	0	2	1
Learners, Career counsellors	0	4	2	0	11
Learners, Parents	0	3	2	0	1
Learners, Parents, Career counsellors	1	1	1	0	0
Learners, Parents, Teachers	0	1	0	0	0
Learners, Parents, Teachers, Career counsellors	0	2	3	0	1
Learners, Teachers, Career counsellors	8	57	5	0	8
Parents, Teachers, Career counsellors	0	0	0	0	11
Teachers, Career counsellors	0	0	0	0	1
Not sure	0	0	1	0	0

These portals were managed by a range of different teams – in England this was typically the local authority (e.g. YC Hertfordshire) or the National Careers Service (see Appendix 1).

Developing bespoke career and labour market information resources

130 respondents stated they developed their own career and labour market information (53 did not, 12 were not sure). With the exception of Malta, respondents were more likely to have developed their own materials than not (see Figure 9).

Figure 9: Do you develop your own career and labour market information?



Introducing career and labour market information (MYFUTURE framework 3.2)

In England, career and labour market information is introduced to young people from the age of 11 although this remains a decision made by schools rather than a national approach. Information might be introduced during subject curriculum or in specific career lessons. Many schools have a careers library which contain prospectuses and leaflets as well as a school website which signposts students and their parents to a variety of local, regional and national materials. Older students (from age 14) will be given career and labour market information during personal and tailored group guidance sessions.

In Malta, information is often introduced organising careers fairs during which students are offered a platform to ask questions directly of employers and education providers.

In Romania, students generally receive tailored information from their career counsellors during personal guidance sessions. Students are introduced to information during specific careers lessons. Parents receive information during parents' events and through discussions with career and subject teachers.

Guidance practitioners in Italy are beginning to question the relevance of traditional formats for providing careers information. Careers fairs for example are no longer seen as effective unless there is considerable preparation and personalisation of the learning from these events. On a practical level software such as SORPRENDO and websites with classifications of professional profiles (managed by INAPP and ISTAT) are regarded as useful tools to teach career and labour market information.

In England, parents are provided with career and labour market information during special parents' evenings, newsletter articles, and parent email. Those parents who attend their children's career guidance interview will also get some from the Careers Adviser.

There is a tradition in Malta of radio use and research participants indicated that the radio remained an effective way of disseminating information particularly to older clients and to parents and guardians.

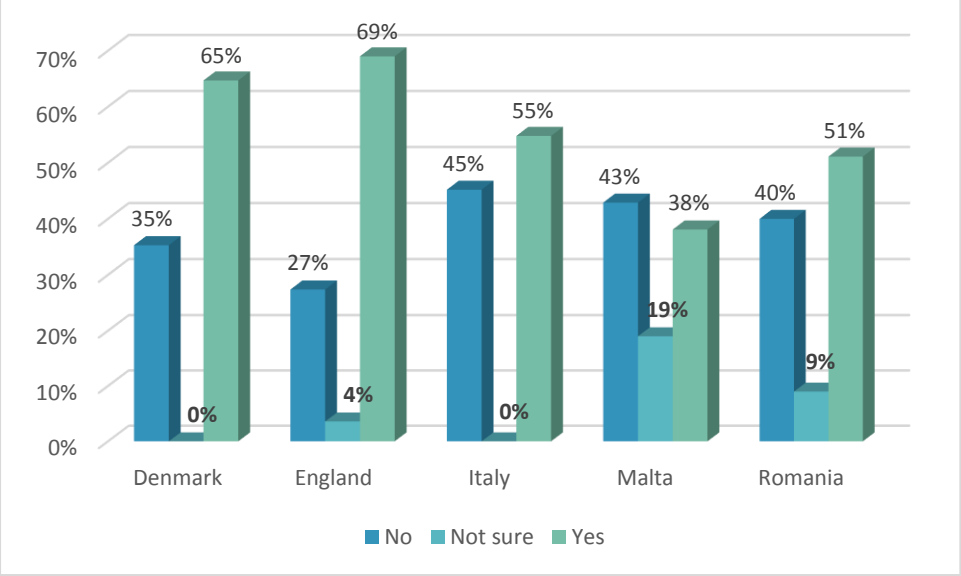
The use of social media (MYFUTURE framework 3.2)

In England, the use of social media for career-related purposes varies across schools in England. Some schools fully embrace social media and use it to communicate with students and parents however some schools restrict the use of social media. In Hertfordshire for example, the advisers have Twitter accounts which they use to promote vacancies and support for exam results and job search. Students are also encouraged to learn how to use LinkedIn to promote themselves to potential employers.

Social media is not regularly used in Maltese secondary schools; some individuals have however taken the initiative to set up Facebook pages to be used by parents and students. In Romania, students constantly use social media to get information from other young people who have similar career interests. There are also educational institutions, and training providers that use social media and constantly manage their virtual accounts with new information. The main sites used for communicating career information are Facebook, Twitter and Instagram. There are a number of small regional projects in Romania which are developing the use of career information and social media.

Respondents from the survey indicated that social media is used in all participating countries as part of their career guidance provision with England showing most use (see Figure 10). Many respondents from each country noted they did not use social media

Figure 10: Do you use social media as part of career provision?



Summary

The research indicates that the provision of career and labour market information is widespread however, the nature and scope of the information varies as does the target audience. The research has revealed that the majority of career development practitioners supplement the provision of national or regional information with resources which they have developed themselves. All countries with the exception of Malta have national web portals although the results of the survey indicate that there is a lack of awareness of these resources in some countries. These websites are targeted as either resources for clients, practitioners or both. The use of social media is a growing phenomenon, however, as a strategy this is only effective where users have good access to the internet and the necessary ICT equipment. This is not the case in Romania for example where careers centres or offices are often ill equipped and there is poor access to mobile technology. The provision and sustainability of ICT facilities is not the domain of this research however it is important to note that without such infrastructure it will be difficult to affect improvement in career development provision or the experiences of young people.

Recommendations

4. Career development practitioners will need to advocate for more effective and accessible national web portals and resources where they are lacking. These should meet the information needs of clients and practitioners and include a range of approaches including web portals, paper-based resources and the use of social media.
5. Career development practitioners need to work with managers to develop effective marketing and communication strategies which promote the availability of career and labour market information.

Implications for MYFUTURE training and development activities

New programmes will need to address:

- The development of career and labour market information and resources in a variety of formats.
- The development of marketing and communicating strategies to promote and inform clients of the services available.
- The use of social media to inform and advise clients.

Benchmark 3: Addressing the needs of each pupil (MYFUTURE framework 4)

> *Pupils have different career guidance needs at different stages. Opportunities for advice and support need to be tailored to the needs of each pupil. A school's careers programme should embed equality and diversity considerations throughout.*

This Benchmark addresses several issues. Firstly, student's career guidance needs differ across students and across years. Whilst some may hold some fairly robust ideas about what interests they have and what careers appeal to them even early on, others may not and may require much more assistance in exploring this even later in their school careers. Secondly, there are groups of individuals who may require differentiated or specialised career guidance provision such as young people with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND), those who are Gifted and Talented, those who come from disadvantaged backgrounds (e.g. students on Pupil Premium) or those who are at risk of becoming NEET. Finally, this benchmark is important in challenging stereotypes, e.g. gender stereotypes.

Holman (2014) states that to meet this Benchmark, schools should:

- have a careers programme that actively seeks to challenge stereotypical thinking and raise aspirations.
- keep systematic records of the individual advice given to each pupil, and subsequent agreed decisions.
- provide access for students to these records to support their career development.
- collect and maintain accurate data for each pupil on their education, training or employment destinations for at least three years after they leave school.

Key elements of this Benchmark is that provision is differentiated for different kinds of learners and that career learning is individually recorded in some way, whether that be online or in hard copy.

In many states in America this more individualised approach has been in place for a number of years as an outcome from the Individuals with Disabilities Act (2006) and school reforms beginning in the 1990's which emphasised the importance of all students being equipped to transition successfully from high school (Solberg, Phelps, Haakenson, Durham & Timmons, 2012). High school students are mandated in more than 20 states to develop an Individualised Learning Plan (ILP); a portfolio style document which logs activities and attended events and details on career aspirations and the courses which they will take to help them realise these aspirations. Clearly for these ILP's to develop, students must engage with career guidance activities.

The fact that these career learning journeys are recorded facilitates monitoring, review and evaluation.

What does this look like in practice?

Moore et al. (2017) worked with a number of English schools who have implemented a range of methods for identifying students who might require specialised carer provision. At one school the careers manager uses a spreadsheet which has information on Pupil Premium, free school meals, young people with special educational needs (SEND), those in danger of becoming unemployed when leaving school and their career activities. The spreadsheet is used to track and monitor these student's progress and each student has a development plan. The careers manager works closely with the Special Educational Needs Coordinator (SENCO) and her team and communicates issues to house leaders.

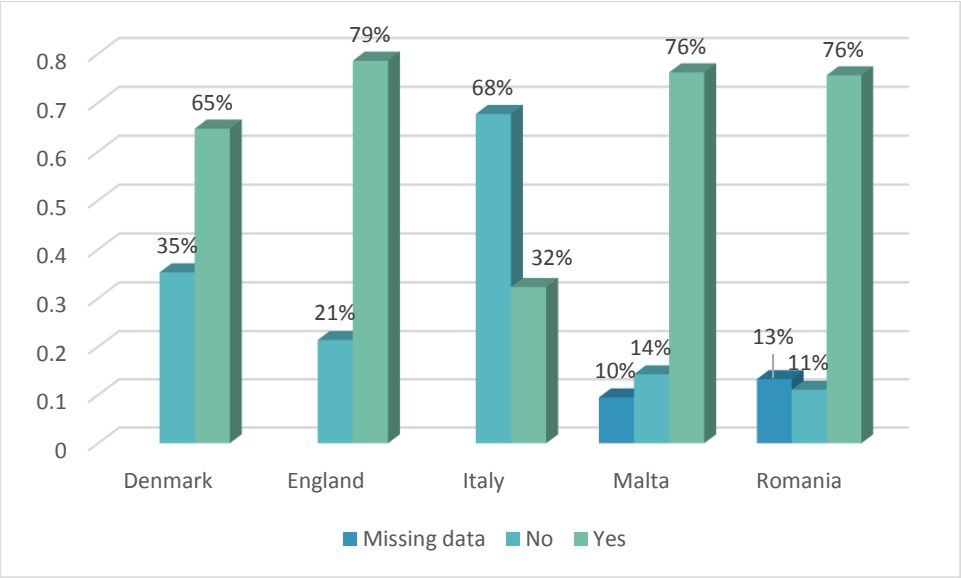
Holman (2014) describes the Individual Pathway Plan (IPP) in Ontario, Canada which is a web-based tool delivered via one of two different software packages. It acts as a portfolio for students to reflect on activities and their career learning as well as facilitating career development activities themselves such as career profiles, career matching and interacting with employers. The ILP is used by school staff to structure conversations with students regarding their development.

Moore et al. (2017) describe an English school which incorporates career planning across all of its systems, for example school reports to parents, from year 7. Self-assessment at each assessment point is mandatory for every student and these assessments include career development learning. Students complete a 'Challenge' booklet to record activities, events, learning and success so it therefore serves to provide evidence for student self-assessment. The process for sixth form students is highly individualised such that they develop their own timetable around individual needs and interests.

Identifying pupils career planning needs (MYFUTURE framework 4.1)

One hundred and thirty-nine survey respondents stated that individuals within their organisation did receive career guidance specially tailored to their own needs (53 stated they did not). Individuals were more likely than not to receive specially tailored guidance in all countries except Italy (see Figure 11).

Figure 11: Do Individuals receive career guidance specially tailored to their own needs?



Predominantly decisions made about the provision of specially tailored guidance were made at the organisational level (n=115), 14 stated it was made at the national level and 13 at the regional level. This trend was the same across all countries (see Figure 12). Malta differed slightly from the other countries in that more respondents noted the role of a regional campaign in targeting individuals for specialised career guidance. Respondents stated that individuals were typically targeted for specialised guidance through organisational based criteria (n=100, 87%), although some stated national criteria was used (n=31, 27%) and 14 respondents noted that regional criteria was used (12%). The trend was for countries to predominantly use organisational based criteria to identify individuals with the exception of Malta who more often made use of their national level criteria (see Figure 13).

In England, all students can access personal career guidance from eleven years old until 19 years old unless they experience a special educational need or disability (SEND) where their provision is extended to age 25. The nature of this provision varies by school. In many schools, students are required to complete a careers interest survey around age 14 which will help the school prioritise the service which they receive. Young people with SEND who have been identified as requiring support with a range of education, social and health needs receive an education health and care plan (EHCP) which is used to monitor their progress. This document and the processes which surround it are managed by a specific member of the school staff called a 'special educational needs coordinator' (SENCO). These plans are monitored at least annually. Young people with special educational needs or disabilities, those considered vulnerable or at risk on becoming NEET (Not in education, employment or training), those receiving free school meals, and those considered gifted and talented are identified and receive additional career guidance.

Figure 12: Targeting guidance to an individuals' own needs, by country

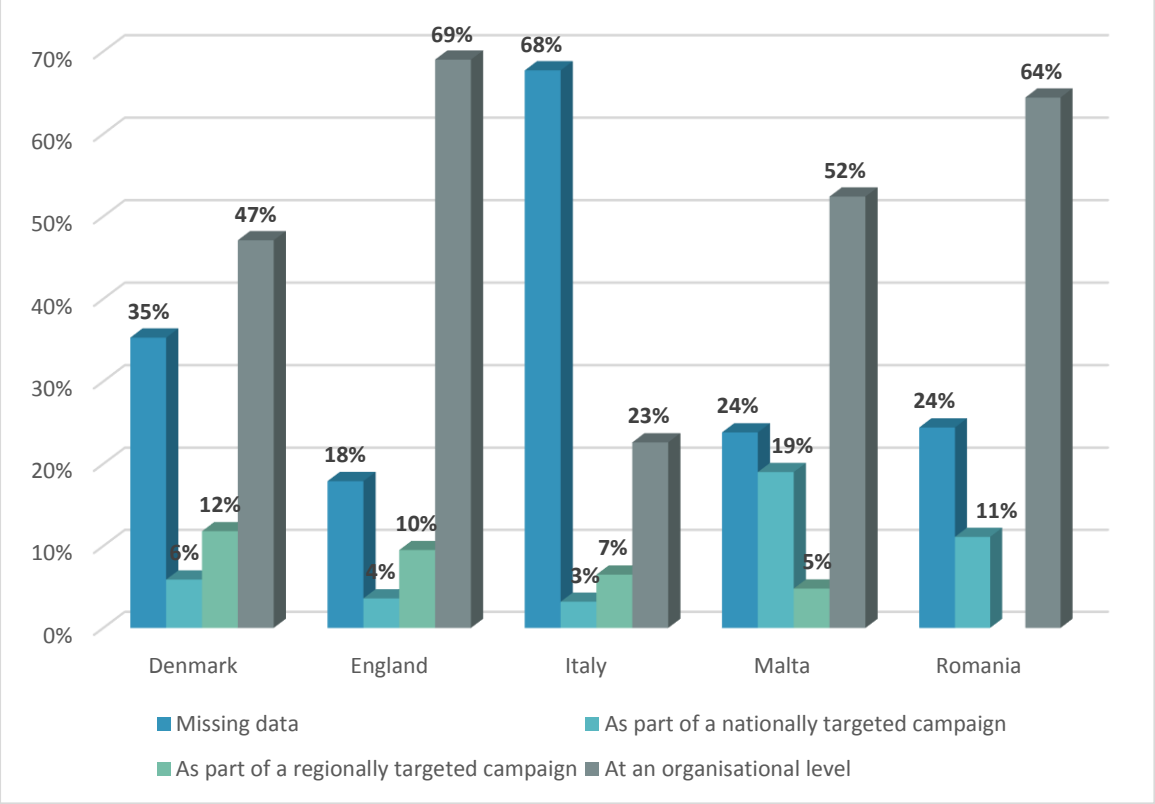
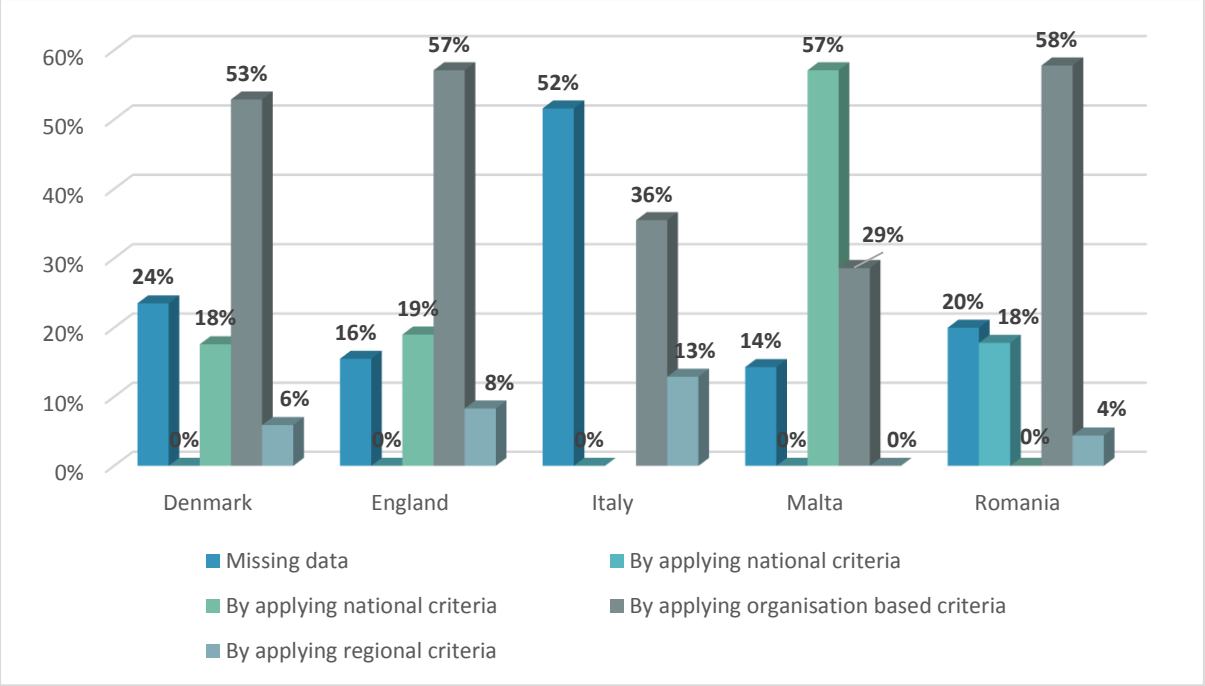


Figure 13: Criteria used for targeting individuals, by country



In Malta, all young people receive a careers programme with additional activities for targeted groups of students. Further to this a range of students (highlighted in government guidance) are targeted including:

- early School leavers
- students who are not sitting for their SEC exams
- students with disabilities
- students with social problems
- students with behavioural problems
- students following the Alternative Learning Programme (ALP)

The targeted service design and provision are largely the remit of local schools and colleges.

In Denmark, all students receive a basis careers education and are then able to request individual career guidance sessions with a careers counsellor or a web-based career guidance counsellor through the national portal. There are some locally funded initiatives which are being used to provide an increased level of personal career guidance for learners.

Pupils in public and private secondary schools are categorised by teachers and career counsellors using a national approach as "not-ready-for-an-education" are entitled to get more career guidance than pupils who are categorised “ready-for-an-education”. The offer includes workshops, individual guidance, and a stronger cooperation between schools, parents and career guides. Once every semester teachers and career guides re-evaluate whether the pupils who were identified as "not-ready-for-an-education" have grown to be ready for their desired youth education or if they need more targeted activities to become ready.

In Romania, all students from aged 3 to 18 receive career guidance. Young people with SEND receive compulsory career guidance. These are identified through observation by a range of professionals including teachers and psychologists. Parents provide permission for their child to be identified as SEND. A further group who are targeted are those students with parents who work abroad, and this is to help them develop emotional stability and resilience.

In Italy, all students in their last year of compulsory education receive career guidance. In addition, there are some targeted activities for students identified by teachers, psychologists and SEND specialists such as:

- Activities to fight school dropout aim at motivating students to their academic trajectory or at identifying new promising trajectories to explore.
- Activities for students with disabilities are often focused on offering support in order to create employment opportunities.
- activities for students with social problems are usually structured to boost motivation, to identify possible solutions associated with academic trajectories or employment opportunities, which are compatible with the student’s life.

Referrals for career guidance (MYFUTURE framework 4.1)

In England**,** school-based careers advisers receive referrals from school staff and parents through a variety of means although formal processes for formal referrals are rare in English schools. Systems involved verbal referrals or referrals by email.

In Malta, the senior management team, subject teachers and psychosocial team refer learners to career guidance. Such referrals take place through formal processes for both internal and external referrals. At times this requires the filling in of specific referral forms and also requiring the consent of parents/guardians.

In Romania, students are referred through a number of processes depending on their needs for example there are formal and compulsory referral requirements for students who are experiencing domestic abuse and most recently for those whose parents are working away. Informal referrals occur amongst school-based staff.

Summary

The research has revealed that the differentiation and targeting of career guidance is widespread although in Italy it is less likely to be the case than in the other partner countries. Decisions about who receives targeted support is usually made at organisational level however in Denmark the service is only delivered to those considered vulnerable. The methods of selecting students for targeted support varies. In some countries this is entirely a decision made by school managers (a top down approach) whereas in others, students are asked to complete an interest questionnaire (a bottom up approach) which is used alongside other data to inform the decision-making process. The target groups remain consistent across partner countries and include those students who

- Have SEND
- Are likely to become early school leavers
- Are likely to become NEET (Not in employment education or training)
- Are considered vulnerable because of a variety of social or health issues

There are some exceptions to this. For example, in England, as well as the above, gifted and talented students are also targeted for additional support. On the other hand, in Romania services are also targeted at those students whose parents are working abroad.

Whilst these approaches result in some students receiving more services than others, it is not clear from the research the extent to which the methods used to target are transparent and understood by all stakeholders. The research did not address this issue however, it is important that processes of targeting support are clearly communicated and understood by all parties to ensure that they are used appropriately to target resources and form the basis of processes of monitoring, review and evaluation.

Processes of referral are poorly articulated across all partner countries with the exception of Romanian which has a formal process in place. In most other partner countries, referral was

at worst by word of mouth and at best by email. There is an inherent danger in weak referral processes. This can lead to a lack of clarity about referral criteria, result in incorrect referrals and a consequential poor or inconsistent use of resources. Informal processes also remove the need for follow-up by the referee and a lack of agency on behalf of the client. Effective referral processes can also provide data which can be used in processes of monitoring, review and evaluation.

Recommendations

6. The processes and criteria which are used for targeting career guidance services need to be transparent and communicated widely to all stakeholders.
7. Resources and training should be developed which ensures that appropriate differentiated approaches are adopted.
8. Career development practitioners and their managers should develop appropriate referral systems which to identify clients' needs, ensure that resources are used effectively and maximise the agency of clients.

Implications for MYFUTURE training and development activities

New programmes will need to address:

- How to target resources to ensure equity and social justice
- Different approaches to supporting clients with a variety of needs
- Effective processes of referral
- Approaches to monitoring, review and evaluation of the effectiveness of targeted services.

Benchmark 4: Linking curriculum learning to careers (MYFUTURE framework 2.3)

> *All teachers should link curriculum learning with careers. STEM subject teachers should highlight the relevance of STEM subjects for a wide range of future career paths.*

This Benchmark addresses the fact that subject teachers actually spend a lot of time with their students, certainly more than career practitioners or employers. Additionally they can have close relationships with students and can be powerful role models and influencers (Holman, 2014). Thus it makes intuitive sense that teachers talk about their subjects in relation to jobs. However, this is not done consistently (even in countries where it is more common place the practice has been described as patchy, Holman, 2014) and schools typically struggle most with meeting this benchmark (Moore et al, 2017). This is likely because

- It requires the buy in from all teaching staff and not just a core of enthusiastic and passionate individuals and
- It is dependent upon the knowledge and experience of the teachers, often times they simply do not have the necessary knowledge or experience.

Holman (2014) reports evidence from America that linking curriculum learning to careers is an effective method for both subject learning and career learning; CareerStart uses real world job scenarios and illustrations to teach maths and sciences (amongst other subjects). The study looked at 7800 students and when CareerStart schools were compared to control schools the study found that they demonstrated greater "career-relevant instruction…higher pupil engagement in school and had improved test scores in math and reading" (Holman, 2014, pp. 23).

A key factor in being able to effectively integrate career learning into the curriculum is communication between the different subjects and the careers team. This facilitates support for subject teachers and permits monitoring and evaluation of the amount and efficacy of work being done (Moore *et al,* 2017) although Moore *et al* note this remains difficult. An important resource which English schools have used to support their efforts towards meeting this Benchmark is the Career Development Institute's (CDI) Framework for careers, employability and enterprise education 7-19[4] . This discusses how schools can contextualise learning to:

- help subject teachers understand the scope that careers and work provide for contextualising subject-based learning
- help subject teachers to identify areas of careers, employability and enterprise education that are relevant for them to incorporate into their subject schemes of work

[4] http://www.thecdi.net/write/BP385-CDI_Framework-web.pdf

- design and plan thematic learning, e.g. identify which learning outcomes to prioritise to contribute to a week of activities on the theme of promoting careers in STEM
- provide 'character' education programmes to support the development of a range of traits, attributes and behaviours (such as resilience and 'grit') that underpin success in learning and work

What does this look like in practice?

A regularly adopted activity to link curriculum learning with careers is for subjects to develop display boards which explore the various careers that are associated with that particular subject. In The Netherlands students can opt to take part in a programme called Technasium where 20% of their curriculum is spent working on real world problems commissioned by organisations which might include doing research for them, developing solutions for a problem they have or creating something new (https://www.technasium.nl).

Moore *et al* (pp. 50) report a variety of activities from the different schools they worked with:

- a PE department who have introduced some professional sports people to deliver aspects of the curriculum;
- a modern foreign languages department who have brought in the Holiday Inn who have asked the students to translate their menus in the subjects which they are learning.
- a design and technology department who have been working with Nestle on the re-designing of KitKat wrappers
- a school who has a STEM week which draws the links between the skills learned in STEM subjects and career options.
- STEM ambassadors visit some schools to help with STEM events.

Teaching career management skills (MYFUTURE framework 2.2)

In English schools most pupils receive discrete lessons which help them to explore their educational options at key decision making points and this is complemented by a programme of careers lessons which are delivered either as identifiable lessons on the timetable or subsumed into a subject aimed at developing personal effectiveness variously called personal, social and health education or personal development. Students also have access to a range of extra-curricular activities aimed at developing their career and employability skills such as the Duke of Edinburgh's award scheme or the National Citizenship Service. Careers education starts from age 11 although the majority of schools start a little later than this at age 14. The CDI has provided curriculum guidance to support schools in developing their programmes.

In Malta students receive a programme of careers education through the personal development curriculum. A national framework of learning outcomes has been developed to support the personal development curriculum. The following topics are taught in these sessions:

- career decision-making (From 12 years)
- CV's, interviews and work ethics (Form 14 years)

- different modes of employment (Form 15 years)

In Denmark, there is no regularly taught programme of careers education, but rather a floating subject called 'education and job' which features occasionally in the timetable. Careers counsellor will provide inputs into secondary school classes. These activities include providing information regarding the education system, company visits, introduction to the career guidance portal etc. The purpose of the timeless subject is to challenge the students when choosing education and strengthen their state of readiness. However, the disadvantage of offering it as a timeless subject is, that it can be difficult for schools to prioritise in a busy schedule.

In Romania, most students learn about careers during counselling and personal development lessons as part of the compulsory curriculum. This includes a special module on developing career management skills. Students produce a personal portfolio of evidence to support their applications.

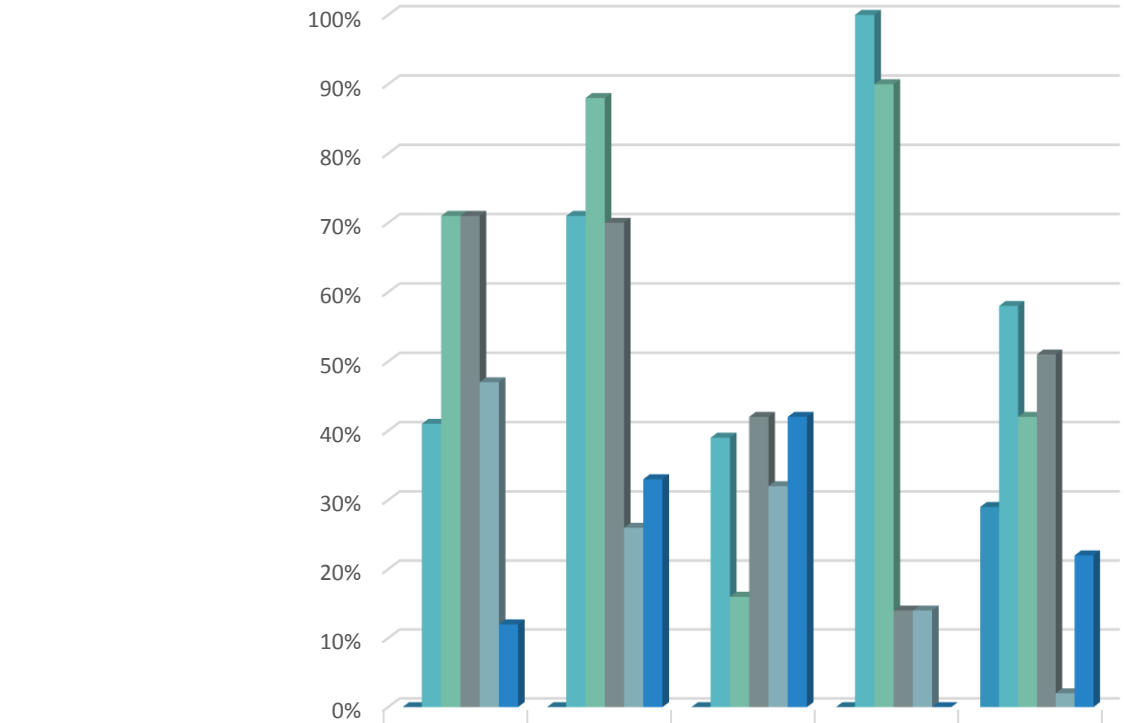
In Italy, it is unusual for students to receive specific lessons to help them to develop career management skills. A number of research participants noted the importance of work-related learning in helping them to develop career readiness.

Career learning in curriculum (MYFUTURE framework 2.3)

The age at which learners receive career learning in the curriculum differs. The survey results indicate that in Romania learners aged from 5 to 20-year olds (see Figure 14) receive taught programmes of career development. The other countries only offered this from 11 to 20 years. In England this mostly took place for learners aged 14-16 years but it was occasionally provided from 11 years old and 16-19 year olds. It was less often provided for those aged 19-20. Respondents from Italy reported more incidences of curriculum linked career guidance in the 11-14 year and 16-19 year old age groups, whereas Malta respondents noted it took place more often for 11-14 year olds and 14-16 year olds. Denmark respondents noted an even occurrence of curriculum linked career guidance across all age groups from 11 upwards.

Thirty-four respondents stated that learners in their organisations did not receive career guidance which was linked to the curriculum – Malta was the only country where all respondents noted curriculum linked career guidance did happen at some stage.

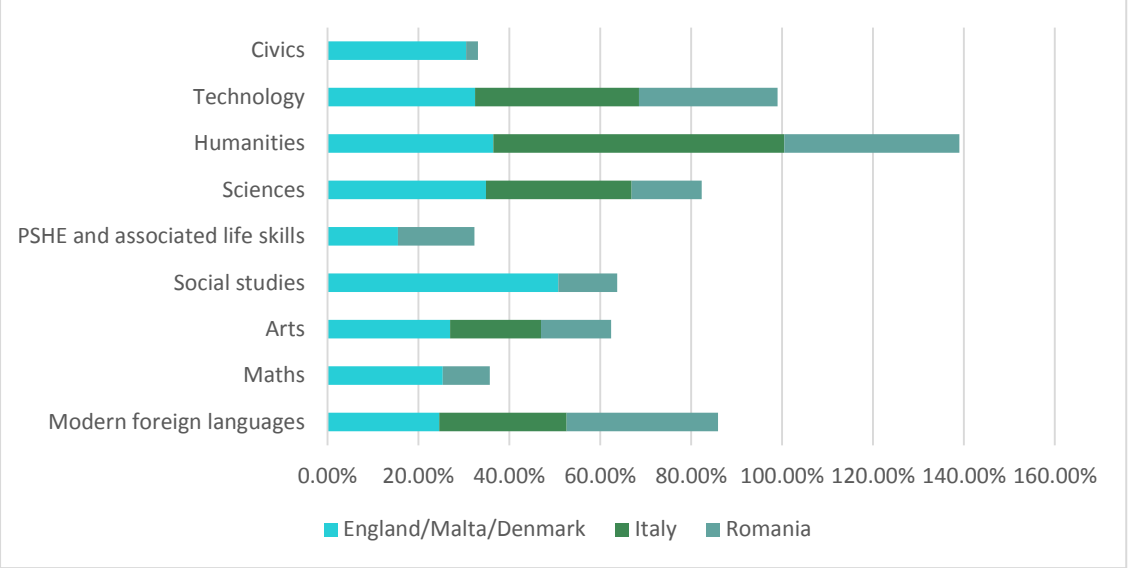
Figure 14: Linking curriculum learning to careers by country



	Denmark	England	Italy	Malta	Romania
5/6-10/11 year olds	0%	0%	0%	0%	29%
11-14 year olds	41%	71%	39%	100%	58%
14-16 year olds	71%	88%	16%	90%	42%
16-19 year olds	71%	70%	42%	14%	51%
19-20 year olds	47%	26%	32%	14%	2%
Students in our organisation do not receive any career guidance in the curriculum	12%	33%	42%	0%	22%

Curriculum learning took place across all the main disciplines listed in the survey; Sciences, social studies, modern foreign languages, humanities, technology, arts, civics and maths. Figure 15 shows the percentages of respondents, by country, noting that curriculum linked career guidance took place in that discipline.

Figure 15: Disciplines where curriculum linked career guidance took place, by country



In English schools, linking national curriculum subjects to career learning is a challenge for most schools and in recent research (Moore *et al* 2017) this was an area of weakness. There is no regular pattern of which subjects do this best although vocational and SEND subjects tend to be easier to link to careers than subjects like art or languages. This is an area for development with schools exploring different approaches to monitoring what career learning students have received through subjects.

In Romania**,** subjects such as technology, literature, maths and foreign languages have elements of career education.

In Italy, students prepare CV's during some language lessons.

Summary

Learners in all countries receive some careers education as part of a wider programme of career guidance however there are some differences between partner countries in terms of when this starts and curriculum model.

Most countries provide some careers education which is embedded within a subject which can be generically referred to as personal development. The extent to which career development was explicit within these programmes was not clear. In some countries, careers lessons were supplemented with additional activities outside the regular curriculum. In Denmark all careers education is delivered entirely through this type of model in a programme called 'Education and Job'.

Across the partner countries there was evidence that career learning was embedded within the majority of curriculum subjects however there was an emphasis on STEM subjects in England.

Recommendations

9. Materials to support careers educators to create innovative learning experiences (for learners from aged 5) both in discrete and embedded activities across the curriculum should be developed.

Implications for MYFUTURE training and development activities

New programmes will need to address:

- How to create and deliver meaningful and innovative career development activities which are focussed on developing career management skills from an early age.

Benchmarks 5 and 6: Thinking about the role of external stakeholders

Encounters with employers and employees (Benchmark 5)

Every pupil should have multiple opportunities to learn from employers about work, employment and the skills that are valued in the workplace. This can be through a range of enrichment activities including visiting speakers, mentoring and enterprise schemes. Every year, from the age of 11, pupils should participate in at least one meaningful encounter with an employer

Young people's career development cannot take place in the isolation of a school or college. Rather, the best organisations provide opportunities for students to learn from various players, including: career development practitioners, subject teachers, employers, and third sector organisations, as well as parents, and alumni. This type of varied and rich provision requires strong management and effective coordination. Mann (2012) has conducted several studies on the importance of encounters with employers for student's career learning. In his 2012 paper 'It's who you meet'[5] he notes the following research findings.

- In the USA research has shown that education which is complimented with multiple encounters with employers is related to more positive labour market outcomes for the students.
- In the U.K. research has found positive relationships between the number of employer contacts (such as careers talks or work experience) that a student experiences in school (between the ages of 14 and 19) and:
    - Their confidence that they are working successfully towards career goals;
    - The likelihood of them becoming NEET – of those surveyed, 7% recalled encountering employers at least four times were five times less likely to be NEET and earned approximately 16% more than those who recalled no encounters.
    - Salaries

Why are encounters with employers so important? Holman (2014) states that employers are central to careers so it's important they form part of the overall career guidance programme. Research suggests that young people pay particular attention to what professionals have to say and that these encounters serve to bolster social capital (Mann, 2012).

What does this look like in practice?

Encounters with employers can take a wide variety of forms including talks, careers fairs, mentoring, and skill development sessions. One organisation that specialises in providing structured employer encounters in schools is Career Ready which is a U.K. charity linking

5 https://www.educationandemployers.org/wpcontent/uploads/2014/06/its_who_you_meet_final_26_06_12.pdf

employers with schools and colleges. It aims to enable schools and colleges to forge productive, stable relationships and networks with employers. They also provide high quality encounters by working with experts to develop good quality resources that employers can use with students to help them develop skills and become better prepared for the world of work. This is done through masterclasses and mentoring. Students can also apply for internships through Career Ready.

Another effective approach, which is particularly predominant in the Netherlands and in Germany (Holman, 2014) is the use of the alumni network. In Germany vocational institutes encourage apprentices and trainees to interact with their students on a regular basis and this is starting to appear in the U.K. too with Rolls Royce offering this.

Independent schools in the U.K. routinely make use of alumni networks to expose their students to professionals (Holman, 2014) and this potential is something that other schools are beginning to recognise. Moore et al (2017) note several schools making use of alumni and family networks to source professionals for career talks and sessions.

Experiences of workplaces (Benchmark 6)

Every pupil should have first-hand experiences of the workplace through work visits, work shadowing and/or work experience to help their exploration of career opportunities, and expand their networks. By the age of 16, every pupil should have had at least one experience of a workplace, additional to any part-time jobs they may have. By the age of 18, every pupil should have had one further such experience, additional to any part-time jobs they may have

OECD analysis shows that where a country delivers an educational programme that combines learning in a classroom with workplace experience that those countries with education systems which offer combinations of classroom learning and workplace exposure (as is done in Germany) there are usually lower unemployment rates (Mann, 2012).

Exposure to work places allows students to experience first-hand what the rules and sanctions of work are – for example being on time, etiquette, dress codes, quality of work. They also permit an understanding of the range of jobs which are available within one organisation. Whilst a one-week work experience placement may traditionally have been the tool used to meet this benchmark, it is recognised now that this is only one of several methods which can be used. Alternatives include work shadowing, go to work with a parent days, extended school or class visits to workplaces or work experience that isn't delivered in a block of one week but is interspersed over a number of weeks.

What does this look like in practice?

Holman (2014) reports a high-quality approach to providing workplace experiences delivered in Ontario, Canada.

"… Ontario has begun to grow a strong, formal work experience programme known as Co-operative Learning (CL). Pupils can opt to take very substantial blocks of CL as part of their

high schooling (from one to eight credits, where one credit is equivalent to 110 hours). CL opportunities are credit-bearing and can be taken in any area in which pupils can find a willing employer. The schools we visited had dedicated CL teachers to lead the employer liaison and to support pupils to prepare for and reflect on their placements. CL is a universal entitlement, but is still a minority activity in Ontario and tends to be used more heavily with vocational pupils than with those bound for university…… CL learning is seen as the jewel in the crown of Ontario's Pupil Success Programme, and represents a gold standard for work experience…" (pp. 27)

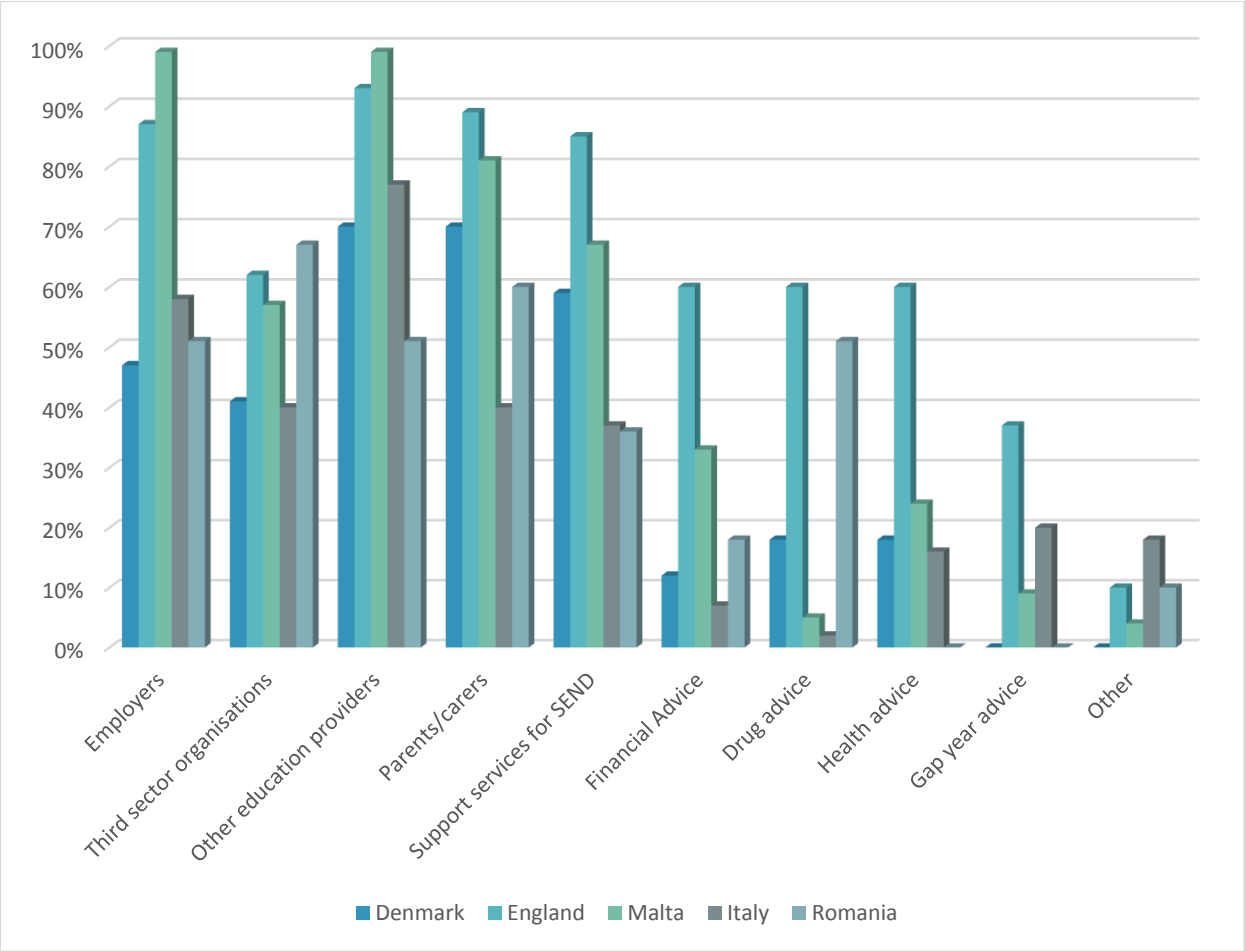
Another example of strong work experience provision comes from Finland (Holman, 2014) which offers a heavily structured approach that enables students aged 13 – 16 years to undertake work experience in each of those years as well as a possible vocational education placement.

In England schools can use a third party to broker work experience placements for their students, for example to find placements and monitor and evaluate their efficacy (Moore et al, 2017). Work experience can be individualised to support those who already have specialist careers in mind as well as helping those still exploring to rule options in and out.

Contributors to career guidance provision (MYFUTURE framework 6.1)

The survey respondents reported working with more than one type of stakeholder. Figure 16 shows the different numbers of responses for each country for each stakeholder type. Large numbers of respondents from England reported working with each kind of stakeholder. The patterns for each stakeholder were similar for all countries although only two countries reported working with organisations that provide advice on gap years (England and Denmark).

Figure 16: Stakeholders worked with, by country



The focus group participants noted a variety of players involved in supporting career development in their schools and colleges. These include employers, public and private organisations, third sector organisations, parents and alumni. Publicly funded organisations liaise with schools to provide support to their programmes. In England for example, the Job centre plus, funded through the government's department of Work and pensions, provides support to schools for job search and CV writing. Staff also provide training and development opportunities for teachers on the opportunities available in the local labour market. A similar model operates in Malta although in both countries these services are only sought after and provided to (in the case of England) state-funded schools. Independent schools in Malta do not tend to make use of this service despite it being offered to these schools. In Italy, publicly funded museums also provide support as well as the stakeholders mentioned above.

Most English state schools have internal and external partners or collaborators. Internal collaborators include subject and specialist teachers (Special educational needs or gifted and talented specialists for example). External stakeholders include employers, community-based stakeholders and more recently members of the Local Enterprise Partnership including enterprise coordinators who are sponsored by the Careers and Enterprise Company

In Malta**,** a very strong network exists locally between Career Advisors in different educational institutions, including those at Secondary level, VET, upper secondary and University level. Once again however, it seems that Career Guidance staff in private and independent schools operate in isolation and do not network often with their peers based in other institutions.

The main external stakeholders which were mentioned during the research were:

Jobsplus: Collaborates with schools for different activities and initiatives however this tends to be restricted to state schools.

Other educational institutions: Different educational institutions collaborate with each other; for instance, staff at Secondary Schools regularly collaborate with the University of Malta and VET providers such as MCAST and ITS such as when organising orientation visits for students.

Educational institutions based abroad: One participant emphasised that service provision has to be internationally oriented when dealing with foreign students; hence contact may be required with other educational institutions abroad in order to obtain information

Employers: Employers are roped in for a number of reasons by Secondary Schools including the provision of placements for the Career Exposure Experience Programme and collaboration for conducting mock interviews. At VET institutions, employers play an even larger role since labour market demands influence the training offered at these institutions.

Professionals: Invited to deliver talks to students and to conduct mock interview sessions.

Parents/Guardians: Participants mentioned how important it is to get parents on board; in fact, one of the participants sent a letter to each parent and invited all students for an individual meeting after which he sent a report to each parent/guardian. Another point raised was the parents may also be employers and business owners, and therefore, such relationships may also provide the opportunity for further collaboration.

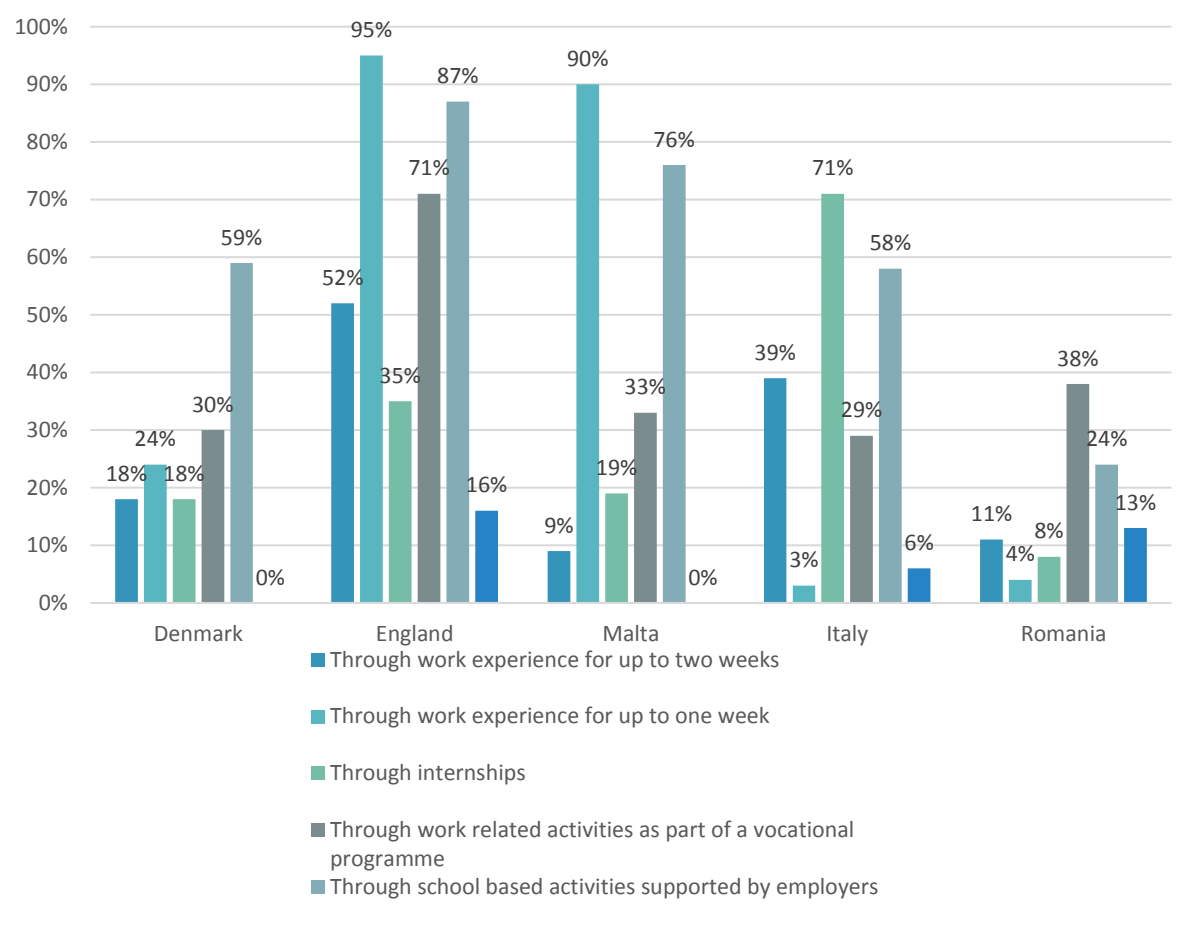
In Romania, the main collaborators are: parents, local authorities, network of schools and high schools, universities, NGOs, many educational or social care institutions. School counsellors establish collaboration protocols with other educational institutions, ANOFOM and universities. The main stakeholders are high schools and the School Inspectorate. High schools promote their own educational offer in schools. Special offers are delivered to professional schools. The School Inspectorate ensures that these offers are accessible to eighth grade students in schools.

In Italy, students tend to prefer peers compared to family members as a source of additional, external advice. During the research, it emerged that peers are thought to be better at understanding the colleagues' difficulties and to be less judgemental and more supportive. In

the majority of cases, students reported that career choices were made independently, and that family members and friends mainly offered moral support.

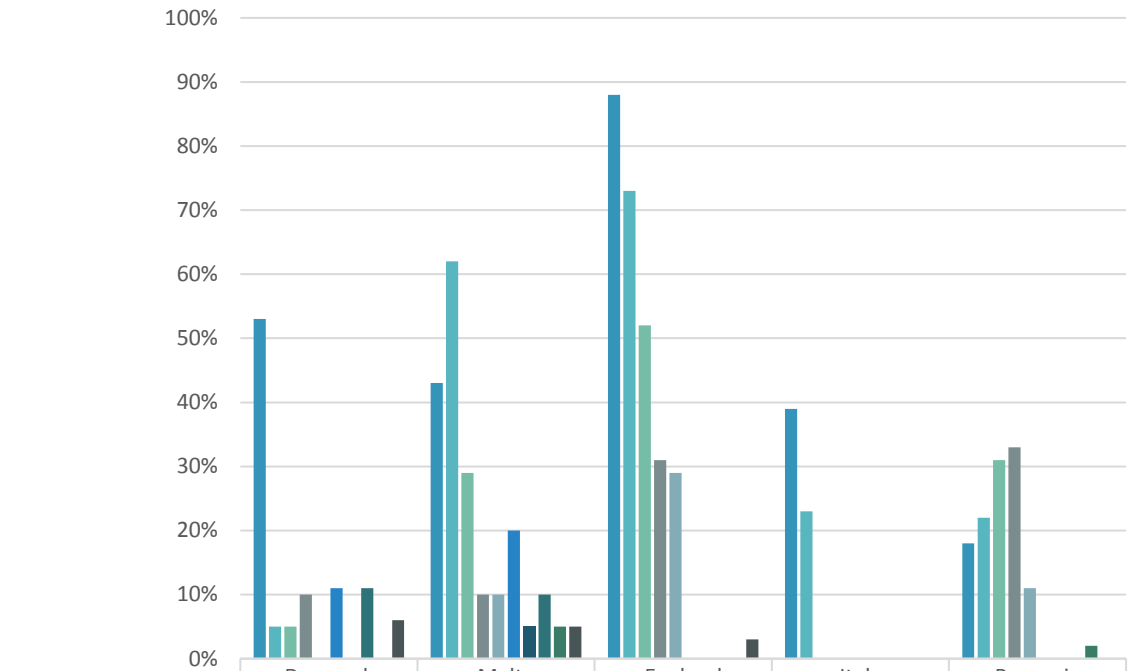
Learners engage with employers in a number of different ways as shown in Figure 17. In Romania the most commonly reported approach was through work related activities which are part of a vocational programme, followed by school-based activities supported by employers. Internships and work experience were reported also but to a lesser extent. Respondents from Italy indicated that internships and work experience for blocks of one week were common as were school based activities supported by employers. Work experience for two-week blocks and work-related activities as part of vocational programmes did take place also but to a lesser extent. In England internships were less commonly reported with work experience for one-week blocks, work related activities as part of a vocational programme and school-based activities supported by employers being the most commonly reported approaches. Work experience in up to two-week blocks did however occur with 44 respondents noting this. Responses from Malta suggest their primary approaches to engaging with employers are through one week blocks of work experience and through school-based activities supported by employers although all other approaches were noted by several respondents. Denmark's primary approach was through school based activities but again several responses for each other approach were noted.

Figure 17: Approaches to engaging with employers, by country



Finally, the survey enquired about the kinds of activities that employers undertook with learners. Figure 18 shows that enterprise activities, mock interviews and CV Development were all commonly provide by employers across all countries. England and Malta displayed the greatest range of different activities, Italy the least; their responses were limited to enterprise activities and mock interviews (placements were offered to although one respondent noted this was done reluctantly). Romania noted a roughly equivalent spread of responses for enterprise activities, mock interviews, CV development and input to the curriculum with fewer responses for governance support and none for the other activities of mentoring, careers fairs, general talks, visits or placements but these were not allocated check boxes, merely suggested in the 'other' box by respondents.

Figure 18: Activities provided by employers, by country



	Denmark	Malta	England	Italy	Romania
Enterprise activities	53%	43%	88%	39%	18%
Mock interviews	5%	62%	73%	23%	22%
CV Development	5%	29%	52%	0%	31%
Input to curriculum	10%	10%	31%	0%	33%
Governance support	0%	10%	29%	0%	11%
Careers fairs	11%	20%	0%	0%	0%
Mentoring	0%	5%	0%	0%	0%
General talks	11%	10%	0%	0%	0%
Visits to businesses	0%	5%	0%	0%	2%
Offer placements	6%	5%	3%	0%	0%

The focus group participants described support from employers and employer organisations as a popular form of external stakeholder engagement in most partner countries. Their input includes activities in schools and colleges as well as the provision of direct experiences of work places. In England, local enterprise coordinators are centrally funded and facilitate the relationships between local businesses and schools. This results in individual enterprise advisers, who are local employers, developing strong supportive relationships with schools. This type of relationship can result in more connectivity between schools and their local communities, an increase in resources flowing in to school (time and money) and an improvement in teachers understanding of the labour market.

The activities provided by employers in schools includes:

- mock interviews
- CV development
- talks related to specific skills needs
- competitions and practical activities linked to sectors or jobs.
- taught input linked to specific curriculum areas

Employer input in VET schools and colleges is more regular and there is a tendency to link employers from specific economic sectors to vocational subjects

Focus group participants indicated that most partner countries provide some opportunities for young people to visit employer's premises but there is no one model for this type of activity**.** In England for example, young people are regularly offered the chance of undertaking a block work experience placement, usually for a week, at aged 15 and a further opportunity at aged 17. This does vary from one school and college to the next. In addition, some curriculum subjects provide opportunities to visit companies as part of the curriculum learning. This is more the case with vocational subjects and tends to be the predominant model in the majority of partner countries although the extent and amount of experiences of workplaces appears to be quite sporadic and is generally not the subject of statutory requirements.

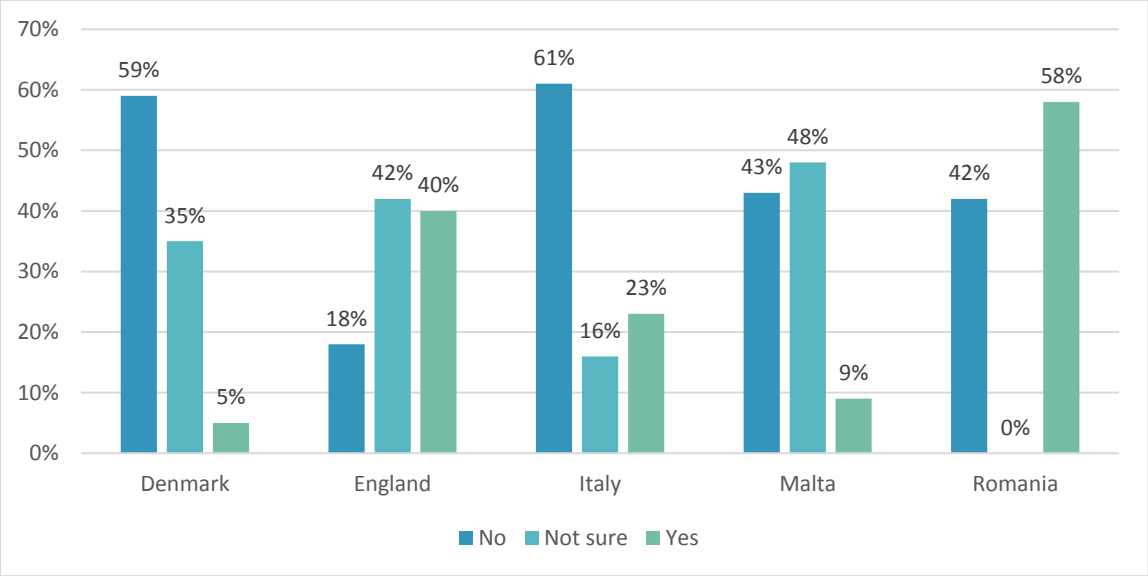
Focus group participants expressed the need to go beyond the idea of occasional collaborations with stakeholders and to move towards the creation of a coordinated and systematic network of stakeholders. This would engage them in planning career guidance projects and would boost the range of opportunities for students and widen the themes covered by the activities.

Work with alumni

The development and utilisation of alumni networks is varied across the partner countries. Less than half of the respondents stated there was an alumni network in their organisation, Romania and England were most likely to report having an alumni network in place. Romania in fact was the only country which was more likely to report having a network than not. In England many respondents (n=35) were not sure about whether there was a network and there was a similar pattern in Malta (see Figure 19). Focus group participants recognised the importance of capitalising on the support of individuals who have made progress in their own

personal career journey. They can provide powerful opportunities for young people to learn. That said, there appears to be no consistent approach to this. This is usually not strategized and is often left to the enthusiasm and commitment of individuals.

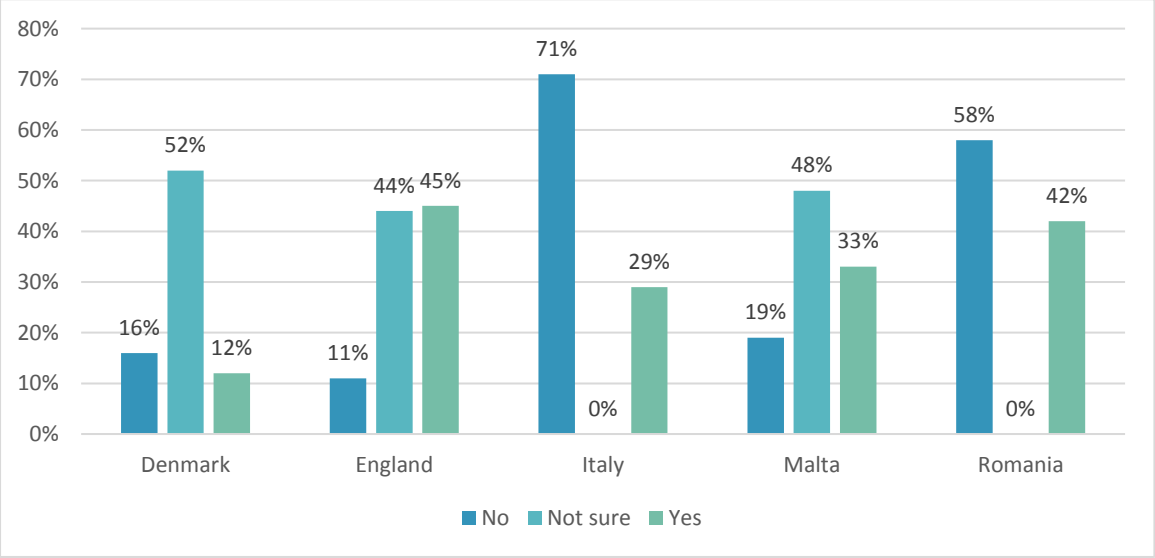
Figure 19: Do you have an alumni network?



The role of stakeholders in developing organisational policy and strategy

Stakeholders were involved in deciding policy and strategy more often than not. England (45%), Romania (42%) and Malta (33%) respondents were more likely to report that stakeholders did inform policy and strategy than the other countries, but they were just as likely to report that stakeholders did not inform policy. In Italy and Denmark stakeholders were less likely to inform policy (71% and 16% respectively, see Figure 20).

Figure 20: Are stakeholders involved in deciding organisational policy/strategy?



The focus group participants noted the importance of parental involvement which is recognised elsewhere in this report, however a number of partner countries noted that parents can also act as collaborators in the development and delivery of career guidance provision. In Malta, for example, parents are sometimes written to and invited to contribute to the programme as business owners and employees. In Romania, parents are encouraged to join parents' associations and can make suggestions for career development activities in their school or college.

Summary

The research has indicated that schools and colleges in most partner countries engage with stakeholders although there is no one model which prevails. The variety of stakeholder is extensive and includes public and private organisations, third sector organisations, employers and employer organisations, parents and alumni. Stakeholders prove a variety of inputs however the most predominant activities are provided by employers. Although employers' activities are more prevalent in VET schools and colleges, there is considerable activity in most organisations and this varies from talks about different sectors, jobs and skills gaps through to more curriculum-related activities. Employers also provide CV workshops and 'mock-interviews'.

Parents have a role to play. There is wide recognition of the importance of parents in supporting their child's career decision making however, this research has shown that in some countries, parents are engaged in developing policy and strategy and in some cases, providing much needed resources.

The research shows that there is no consistency in models of alumni engagement. The coordination and management of alumni networks is seldom done strategically or systematically. One partner noted the need to engage in a more coordinated and strategic engagement with stakeholders which go beyond occasional and sporadic activities.

Recommendations

10. Strategies for parental engagement should be developed to ensure that where possible, parents can engage in strategic discussions about career guidance provision and make contributions in resources to support their children's schools and colleges.
11. Organisations should review their approaches to alumni engagement. This will ensure that schools can make the most of the inspiration that past pupils can provide to existing learners. Alumni often wish to invest in their old schools and can provide a useful source of financial and practical resources.
12. Organisations should review the management and coordination of stakeholder activities to ensure that is coherent across the organisation.

Implications for MYFUTURE training and development activities

New programmes will need to address:

- Different approaches to engaging parents
- Ways of developing and sustaining alumni networks
- Strategic approaches to stakeholder engagement

Benchmark 7: Experience of further and higher education providers (MYFUTURE framework 6)

> *All pupils should understand the full range of learning opportunities that are available to them. This includes both academic and vocational routes and learning in schools, colleges, universities and in the workplace.*

Many students will not be considering going straight into employment; for them their choices revolve around finding the right course to study, whether that be at a college of further education or at a university. In the UK there has been a long tradition of widening participation and encouragement of students to attend university if academically capable. However, with the introduction of tuition fees (£9000 per year for a minimum of three years) and the development of apprenticeships and higher apprenticeships, it has become increasingly important that schools and colleges make the full range of further study options known to all students. Universities typically offer a range of outreach activities to schools in England that have students who are less likely to consider university as an option so even those students whose parent or family have not attended university may have the opportunity to learn about Higher Education, visit institutes and possibly even experience taster sessions. This is not necessarily the same with colleges of further education so many (if not all) students will know comparatively little about what college involves and what qualifications and opportunities it affords. Given that higher apprenticeships now provide students with both work experience and a degree qualification (without the costs of attending university for three years) this is a significant loss to students. The problem arises in part because schools in England who offer a sixth form are in competition with colleges (where students can go to do their sixth form) and so schools have been guilty of making relatively little time available to colleges to interact with students.

Holman (2014) notes that often the most effective encounters with HE and FE come in the form of talks/conversations with current HE students or apprentices. This approach is particularly predominant in Germany and the Netherlands however their education system splits pupils earlier on into academic and vocational educational pathways which facilitates interactions between schools and colleges.

What does this look like in practice?

Universities and colleges, as well as third party providers such as Brightside and Think for the Future, certainly in the U.K., typically offer a range of different sessions and visits to schools including:

- interactive learning sessions in school where students learn about university/college, how to apply, what it costs, what it involves, its benefits, the types of courses available
- skill development sessions
- visits to university/college campuses which might include taster classes and talks from current students
- mentoring

In the UK, the government has provided funding for a National Collaborative Outreach Programme (NCOP) which has a number of local level teams. In each of these teams local colleges and universities work together, and are funded through NCOP, to develop a comprehensive programme of events, activities and sessions for schools in the locale. These activities are designed to raise aspirations, broaden and develop knowledge and awareness of the full range of study options and develop skills and self-confidence. The project is still being rolled out so whether it will influence attendance, attainment and progression as is intended is unknown as of yet however the programmes of events on offer to schools are impressive.

Maintaining professional knowledge and expertise

Career development practitioners regularly visit FE and HE providers to learn about changes in programme offers and changes in admission processes or fees. This is a system which operates across all partner countries.

Introducing students to FE and HE options

Students in England have several ways of gaining information and experience of further and higher education providers. These usually fall into five categories.

- Attendance at talks provided by staff from FE and HE establishments
- Attendance at careers fairs and events at which FE and HE providers are present
- Visits to FE and HE establishments
- The use of digital resources
- Leaflets, prospectuses and institutional websites

Visits are largely evaluated through the use of verbal feedback or the use of evaluation sheets or surveys. In Romania, attendance at these events is monitored to ensure that they are attractive to potential students.

The pattern is similar for other participating countries. There are some variations in the way strategy is developed for example, in Malta, a 16+ Working Group has been set up under the leadership of the director, of the national school support services where all post-secondary educational providers participate. The focus of the work is to find ways to support low achieving students who might drop out of the system without support and follow up.

In Denmark, learners noted that educational internships at educational institutions are very helpful and they would like to revisit them after a period of time, to confirm their first impressions or visit a different educational institution to get a deeper impression of more opportunities. They point out that a subject in the secondary school can be very different from the same subject on a youth education institution, which is important to consider when choosing education.

Summary

All partner countries provided evidence of young people being exposed to further and higher education opportunities. This includes through opportunities to meet representatives of institutions at careers events and seminars and through organised visits. In England technological solutions have also been developed which encourage students to explore further and higher education as appropriate options. Young people reflected that visits to institutions were very helpful in supporting their career decision making.

Recommendations

13. Although this area of career development is done well across partner countries there is some merit in exploring how digital technology can support students understanding of further and higher education offers. This is particularly important for young people in rural and isolated areas where regular visits to colleges and universities might be difficult to organise and resource.

Implications for MYFUTURE training and development activities

New programmes will need to address:

- Digital solutions to provide learners with knowledge and understanding of further and higher education opportunities.

Benchmark 8: Personal guidance (MYFUTURE framework 4 and 7)

> *Every pupil should have opportunities for guidance interviews with a career adviser, who could be internal (a member of school staff) or external, provided they are trained to an appropriate level. These should be available whenever significant study or career choices are being made. They should be expected for all pupils but should be timed to meet their individual needs.*

Personalised individual career guidance is important because it is impartial, it is tailored to the student's own needs and can give them concrete next steps; research also shows it has a positive outcome for the student's progression (Whiston et al, 2011) as well as bringing economic benefits (Hooley & Dodd, 2015).

Key to the success of personal guidance is that the individual giving the guidance is appropriately trained and qualified (to a minimum of European Qualification Framework level 3 but preferably 6-7); having the requisite skills to conduct counselling session properly and the knowledge to talk expertly about different occupations and the routes into them. This person can be internal to the school/college or can be external and contracted in. In either case it is important that monitoring and evaluation takes place to ensure that each student is afforded the guidance and that the guidance is of the requisite calibre. Holman (2014) notes that excellent guidance is often tied to the pastoral systems in place in schools.

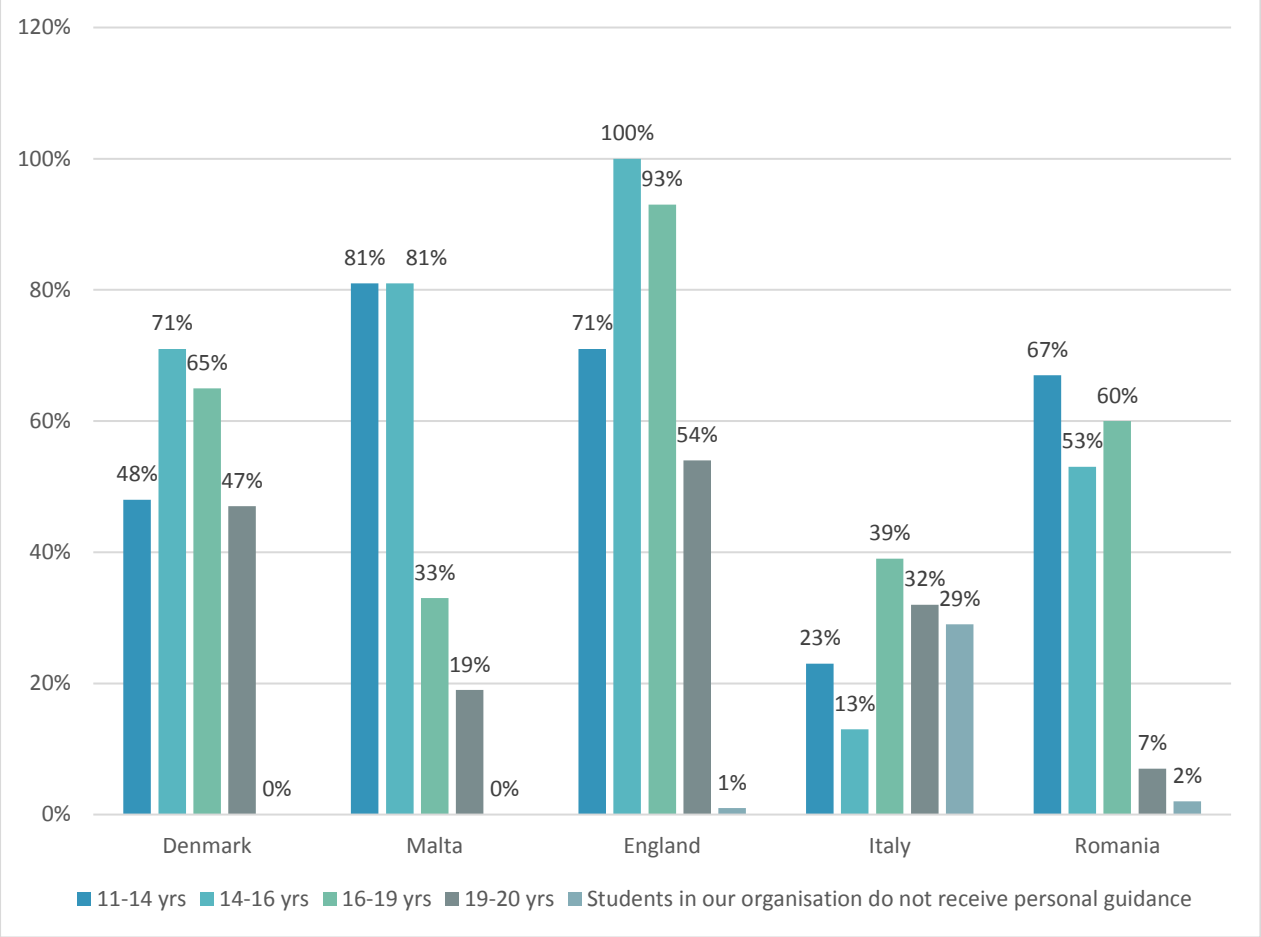
What does this look like in practice?

Each student should see a qualified career guidance practitioner at least once during their school career – preferably 2-3 times – around key decision-making points such as choosing which subjects to study. Schools showing excellent practice in this area will tie individual appointments with practitioners to pastoral care such that counselling sessions can be used as a means of helping students to become motivated to attend, engage and improve behaviour.

Who receives personal career guidance? (MYFUTURE framework 4.1)

Survey respondents indicated which age groups of learners received personal career guidance (see Figure 21). Italy, Romania and England had a very small proportion of respondents who stated that students in their organisation did not receive personal career guidance. Of these respondents, the majority described their role as career counsellors or advisors (n=21). Since these respondents reported working across several different organisations it is impossible to tell from this data what kind of organisations did not provide personal career guidance – they might for example be HE or FE institutes. Personal career guidance was noted to be provided to all age groups although it could be argued there was a very slight tendency for this to take place slightly more often in the 14-16 year age group (although 11-14 year olds also appeared to commonly receive personal guidance).

Figure 21: Who receives personal career guidance?



The provision of personal guidance delivery in England is determined by legislation which requires schools to provide access to independent, impartial career guidance by an appropriately trained person. The pattern of provision varies by school. In some instances, access to personal career guidance is an entitlement for all young people from age 11 although who delivers this may be different. In other schools the age at which students access professional career guidance is later (14 or 15 years of age) and this is the normal pattern.

Many schools commission external providers of career guidance to provide support for specifically identified groups although the qualifications of practitioners vary from level 4 to level 7.

The rest of the school population may have access variously to

- drop in sessions at break and lunchtime
- self-referral
- group guidance which is targeted at interest groups such as those seeking apprenticeships.
- personal guidance provided by teachers or senior school leaders who have no professional career guidance training.

Many schools in England use a personal interest questionnaire to identify groups of students for targeted career guidance. Referrals for personal career guidance are made by teachers and pastoral teams.

In Denmark, only students who are risk of not making a sustained transition are given career guidance and this can be either through personal guidance or through group sessions. Schools are required to report on the destinations and progression routes of learners.

In Romania children aged 3-18 years old can receive individual personal career guidance but this has to be with parents' written consent.

In Italy, most students reported that they had not received personal career guidance and had no knowledge of who delivered this or how to access personal career guidance should they need it.

Training and qualifications to deliver career guidance (MYFUTURE framework 7.1)

In England, the Career Development Institute recognises and endorses a range of levels of qualifications for those delivering personal careers information, advice and guidance (CDI 2015b), summarised below:

Level 4: This qualification is of relevance to practitioners working in a role where they provide career information and advice but not career guidance.

Level 6: This qualification is of relevance to practitioners whose role involves providing career guidance and development to clients.

Level 7: This leading professional vocational qualification is for those who want to make a real difference to improving the quality of people's lives through the design and delivery of effective career guidance.

In Malta, the training for teachers in secondary schools includes some elements of pastoral support and personal guidance. Teachers who are delivering career education and guidance are supervised by a career development practitioner who holds a level 7 qualification.

In Denmark, those who deliver career guidance have undertaken a diploma in "Education-, Vocational- and Career Guidance" provided by one of five university colleges in Denmark, or they have an equally qualifying education and will start this diploma within a few years. They also attend seminars and courses to develop their guidance skills. These courses are provided by universities, private companies, guidance centres etc.

In most countries, teachers have some access to continuing professional development activities which help them keep up to date with knowledge about the local labour market and further study options. In some countries this is supported by online information resources for staff.

Practitioners in Malta organise a Euroguidance Conference which is partly funded by EU funds. This conference is organised in collaboration with the NSSS and Jobsplus and is held once a year (Debono, 2017).

In Romania, school counsellors have bachelor's degrees in either psychological, pedagogical or sociological disciplines. School counsellors then specialise in post-graduate programmes which include psychotherapeutic, pedagogical, sociological, career content. Many school counsellors have no career counselling specialisation.

Summary

Personal guidance is provided by all partner countries but there are variations in who receive it. In England is compulsory for schools to provide access to personal guidance however this can be though a range of activities including through small group guidance. Many schools operate lunch time drop in sessions and access to information and advice. In Denmark, personal guidance is only provided to those who are identified as in danger of not making a sustained transition. In most countries there is a process of targeting personal guidance. All countries have a training programme which results in a qualification to deliver personal guidance however the entry criteria and level of qualification varies. There are a range of opportunities for teachers to develop their knowledge and skills in order to deliver more effective career learning. These vary from formal programmes, in service training, information bulletins and newsletters.

Recommendations

14. The provision of continuing professional development training should be aligned to the new European quality standards for careers education.
15. Quality standards for delivering personal guidance to young people should be developed to ensure that there is consistency in provision.

Implications for MYFUTURE training and development activities

New programmes will need to address:

- Good practice in providing personal guidance

Professional skills, knowledge and understanding

This section sets out information about the training and support needs of practitioners across the participating countries. It explores the level of confidence that practitioners have in the capability to deliver guidance and what practical and training needs they have to help them to improve their practice.

How career guidance has made use of digital technology

Hooley (2012) notes that the internet and other digital advances have had a fundamental effect on careers; the internet offers new opportunities to give and receive career support, it also changes the context within which careers are enacted - digital technologies provide a new platform or mechanism for individuals to search for (or be recruited to) new jobs, it facilitates networking and also allows deep mining of information on careers, sectors and particular organisations.

"ICT integrates the data processing capacity of computers with the data transmission capacity of digital networks to increase access to career interventions, as well as increase access to career practitioners and other decision makers" (Sampson & Osborn, 2013, pp. 3.)

Hooley, Hutchison & Watts (2010) discuss eight trends in ICT that can impact on an individual's career development: community; collectivising knowledge; individualisation; recognising time and place; located in the cloud; free or almost free; diverse and integrated and games. These have changed the way that people use ICT; as Hooley (2012) illustrates, social network usage surpassed email as a form of communication in 2009 and a year later Facebook became a more popular website than google. Social media usage has altered how we communicate with each other and this is quite apparent in the domain of career development, changing as it has the way people search for jobs, apply for jobs and are screened for jobs (Hooley, 2012).

ICT has a number of different roles to play in the domain of career development and guidance. Barnes, La Gro & Watts (2010) suggested there are four:

- *informing* (accessing career information)
- *experiencing* (learning from virtual online simulations)
- *constructing* (understanding their situation using online assessments)
- *communicating* (accessing social networks for support and action, wider access to placement or opportunity awareness)
- Others have suggested ICT has three roles (Osborn, Dikel, and Sampson, 2011)
- *understanding* (helps an individual understand the nature of their problem)
- *acting* (helps an to solve their problem)
- *coping (*helps an individual to cope with problems)

The career practitioners' role has therefore changed somewhat as it now requires them to be able to help individuals find, choose and use the best ICT applications for their needs and

readiness. Sampson & Osborn (2013) argue that practitioners now need the following competencies:

- Knowledge of computer-assisted software and Web sites
- Capability to diagnose client needs
- Capability to motivate clients
- Capability to help clients process data
- Capability to help the client create and implement an action plan.

A computer-assisted career guidance system (CACGS) has many capabilities which include assessment, searching for options and information delivery. CACGS offers the following forms of career guidance activities in a way which is coherent and integrated and that are both synchronous and asynchronous (Sampson & Osborn, 2013):

- on-line chats with a career practitioner
- career videos in English and other languages
- career portfolio systems
- the sharing of information via social media (e.g., LinkedIn, Facebook, and Twitter),
- creation of educational and career plans
- job placement tools, such as resume builders, interviewing practice, and drafting cover letters and thank you letters
- local job banks and the capacity to research local employers
- exporting important event dates to a calendar
- supplemental digital publications on various career topics
- calendar reminder for educational and career plans
- technical and training support (phone service, online chat, webinar)

Stand-Alone Web Sites

A huge array of individual websites exist that are designed for self-exploration and career planning. They cover anything and everything from data banks to labour market and career information. Such websites are also typically well linked to other relevant websites which gives the individual user access to a wealth of information with relative ease and expediency. However, these websites may vary significantly in the quality and accuracy of their information and their ability to convey that information in a way that is useful to users (Harris-Bowlsbey & Sampson, 2005).

Internet-Delivered Career Guidance and Information Systems

These forms of systems allow users to explore themselves along a variety of dimensions (e.g. personality, interests, values, skills) and match them to particular careers or jobs; they may even go further providing individualised guidance based on them and their differing career readiness.

Systems to Support Knowledge Sharing and Generation

The internet permits the collection of range of knowledge and information in one place; this might include research findings, theory, impact analysis, use of research in practice, the improvement of practice, lifelong learning, and international perspectives. Often these sites also allow for two-way interaction so users can jointly develop, edit and modify the information or resources as well as sharing experiences, form networks, collaborate and debate (Harris-Bowlsbey & Sampson, 2005).

Systems Providing Information and Training

Web sites can be used to house databases on a range of activities, opportunities and events including learning courses, assessment tools and guidance activities (Harris-Bowlsbey & Sampson, 2005).

The Pros and Cons of ICT

The Internet provides increased access to information for everyone and may be particularly beneficial to those with disabilities or who live in remote geographic locations. It is also oftentimes anonymous which many people may be attracted to. The varied range of individual specific needs can be met through the internet much more easily and this is further enhanced by the fact that the medium is both interactive and can provide learning in a range of different ways. ICT can also be cheaper and more cost effective.

However, the use of ICT in the delivery of career interventions does raise some potential issues. The reliability and validity of the information, assessments and interventions available has not necessarily been checked so may be questionable (Sampson & Osborn, 2013). Sampson & Osborn (2013) also point out that applications have not always been underpinned with career theory. Furthermore, applications may not be used properly or may be used instead of talking with a practitioner when the reality is that they are often designed to be used in conjunction with, not instead of, a career practitioner. As with the internet generally there may also be considerations of the security and confidentiality of client information.

The skills required for using digital technology effectively

“Digital career literacy is concerned with the ability to use the online environment, to search, to make contacts, to get questions answered and to build a positive professional reputation” (Hooley, 2012, pp. 5). Digital career literacy is key to successful career development and essentially requires both digital literacy skills and career management skills.

Digital literacy frameworks (e.g. Eshet-Alkalai, 2004; Rosado & Bélisle, 2007) typically include some conceptualisation of information literacy, competencies around using ICT tools, creation and adaption of online materials and online networking as well as traditional career management skills (Hooley, 2012). Hooley (2012, pp. 6) has distilled these in to seven elements which are referred to as the seven C’s of digital career literacy:

- *Changing:* the ability to understand and adapt to changing online career contexts and to learn to use new technologies for the purpose of career building.
- *Collecting*: the ability to source, manage and retrieve career information and resources.
- *Critiquing*: the ability to understand the nature of online career information and resources, to analyse its provenance and to consider its usefulness for a career.
- *Connecting:* the ability to build relationships and networks online that can support career development.
- *Communicating*: the ability to interact effectively across a range of different platforms, to understand the genre and netiquette of different interactions and to use them in the context of career.
- *Creating:* the ability to create online content that effectively represents the individual, their interests and their career history.
- *Curating*: the ability of an individual to reflect on and develop their digital footprint and online networks as part of their career building.

Confidence in professional capability

Most practitioners of personal career guidance in England have received training to undertake this area of work. Those providing para-professional support have received differing levels of training and support including some formal training and some experiential training. The Career Development Institute recognises and endorses a range of levels of qualifications for those delivering personal careers information, advice and guidance (CDI 2015b), summarised below:

Level 4: This qualification is of relevance to practitioners working in a role where they provide career information and advice but not career guidance.

Level 6: This qualification is of relevance to practitioners whose role involves providing career guidance and development to clients.

Level 7 (Postgraduate): This leading professional vocational qualification is for those who want to make a real difference to improving the quality of people's lives through the design and delivery of effective career guidance.

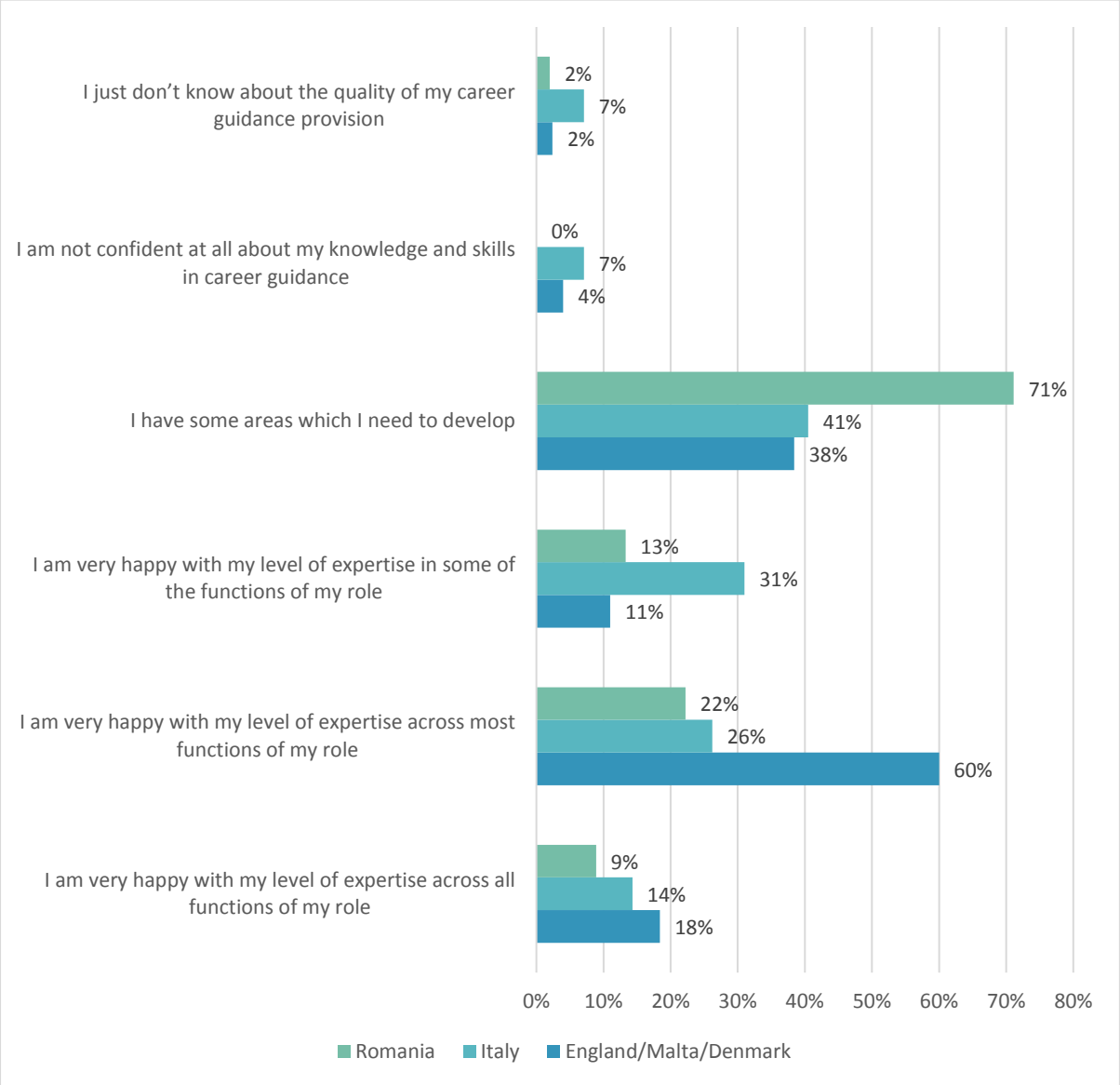
Practitioners in Denmark noted that there was a gap in the training which they received in professional practice and the challenges which providing this service in 'real world' settings presented.

Practitioners in Romania suggested that whilst they had received training, they still lacked confidence in knowing the professional standards which were required, and which could guide their own continuing professional development

The survey results suggested that most respondents had some areas which they would like development in (see Figure 22), and this was particularly evident within the Romanian responses, but the results clearly indicate that respondents were more likely to know about

the quality of their career guidance and have at least some confidence in their knowledge and skills than not. Typically, respondents were more likely to report that they were happy with their level of expertise for most functions within their role.

Figure 22: Percentages of satisfaction with levels of expertise, knowledge and skills within roles



Providing support for career development practitioners

Most practitioners in England feel that time and money would help to meet their professional development needs. These resources could be focussed on more regional training sessions which involved schools and colleges who come together to share practice.

In Malta, the clarion call was for more career guidance resources such as ICT tools and physical facilities, such as career guidance rooms, and career and labour market information.

Maltese practitioners would also value more supervision and mentoring to improve the delivery of career guidance interventions.

Practitioners in Denmark would like more flexibility to work with a range of clients as, at present their practice is restricted to targeted groups

Romanian practitioners felt that their practice would be improved by a nationally recognised set of standards for practice and an ethical code supported by a national web portal with materials to support practice.

What areas are priorities for continuing professional development?

Across all participating countries there were similarities in practitioners training requirements. These can be classified into two broad areas:

Professional competence which includes training and ongoing continuous professional development to:

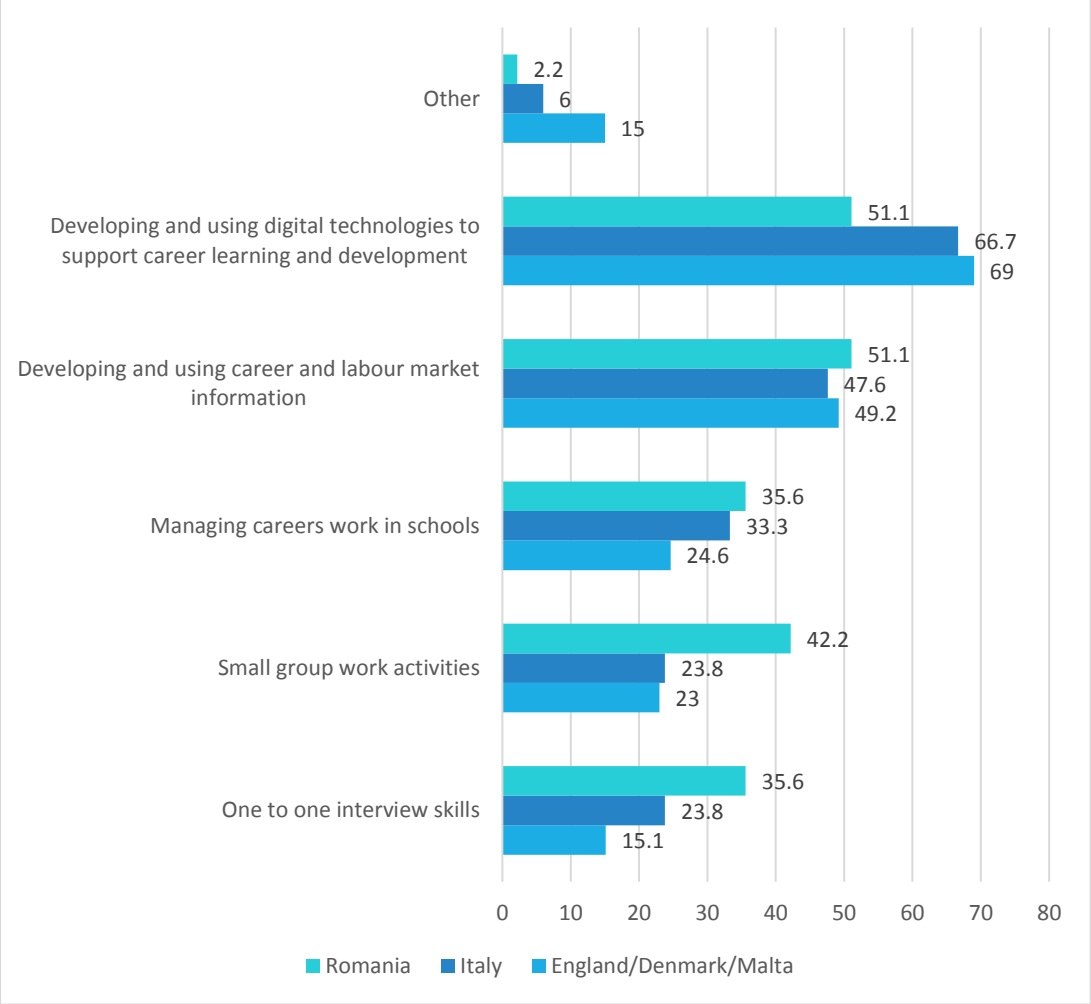
- deliver personal guidance
- deliver group counselling abilities
- support different target groups,
- develop and use career and labour market information
- develop and use digital technologies
- develop practice based on the latest international developments

Professional knowledge which includes:

- Information on new routes
- Information on new job and career paths in specific sectors.
- Quality standards and frameworks

In the survey, the areas which were most frequently cited as areas respondents would like training on were the development and use of digital technologies and the development and use of career and labour market information (see Figure 23). Significant numbers also reported wanting training on one to one guidance skills, small group activity working and the overall management of guidance in schools. A number of 'other' responses were recorded. Several of these referred to innovative and practical strategies or skills which would facilitate working with special groups such as vulnerable adults or young boys (aged 8-14 years) as well as working with parents. Several comments referred to the development of knowledge, for example of health and science-based professions, entry requirements across post 16 and 18 options and on occupational knowledge and career routes generally as well as theoretical perspectives. One respondent noted it would be useful to have up to date feedback from employers on their requirements and one person stated that training on quality assurance methods would be beneficial. The sharing of good practice internationally was noted.

Figure 23: Percentage of respondents indicating a need for each training/support item



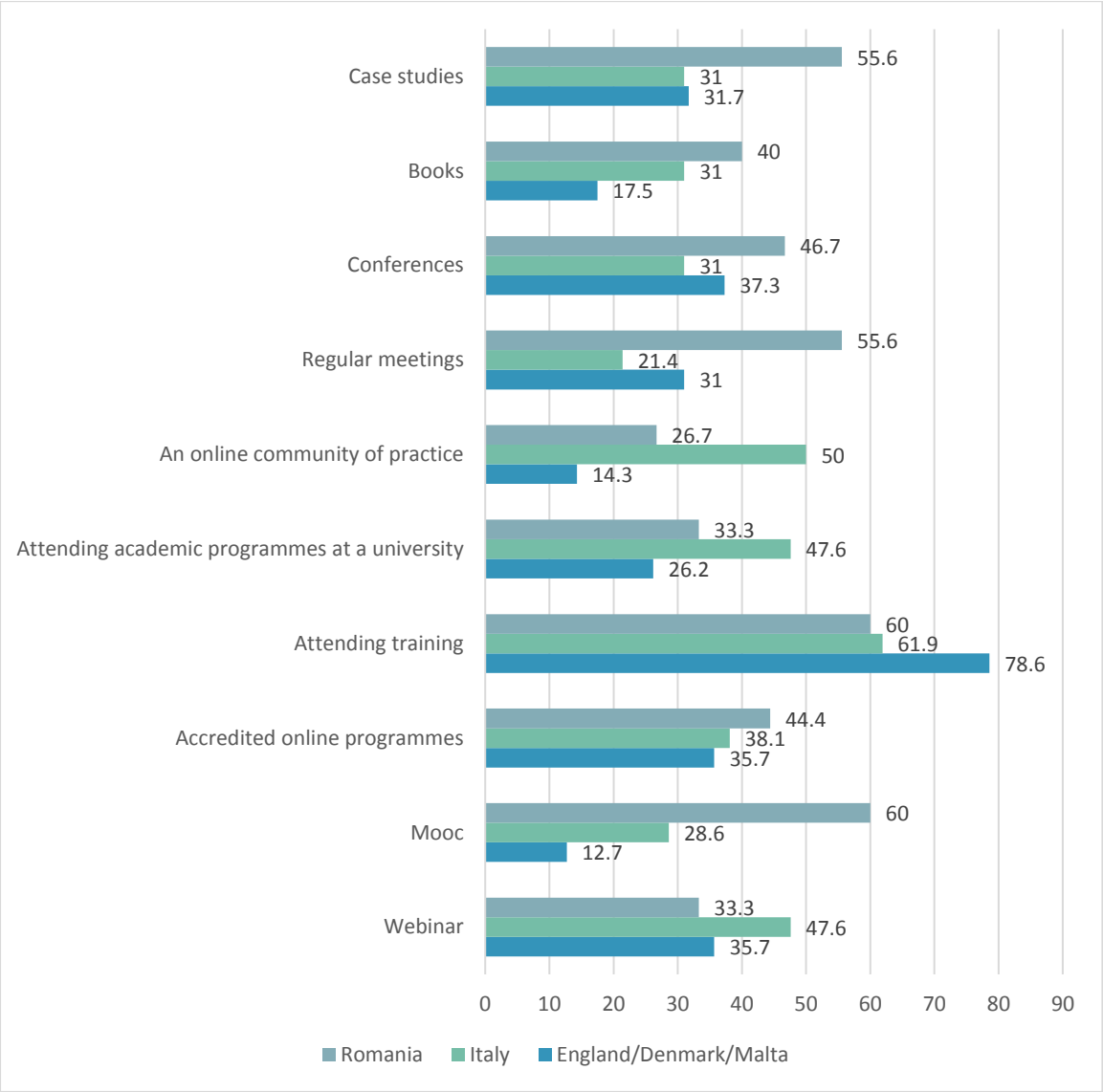
Preferred teaching and learning approaches

The preferences for learning/training activities were similar across all participating countries and included a range of activities including

- Face to face training providing practical activities aimed at sharing practice
- E-learning through MOOCS and platform-based activities
- Seminars
- International study visits
- Visits to employers representing a wide range of industrial sectors
- Conferences

Figure 25 shows the percentage of respondents in the survey indicating that each activity type would be a preferred approach to learning/training.

Figure 24: Training approaches and percentages of respondents who chose them



Summary

Career guidance practitioners are making increasing use of digital technology to deliver their services. This is a growing phenomenon and whilst practitioners in partner countries are not all using technology to the same extent, there is a recognition that this is an area where practitioners need further development.

Using technology was not the only area which practitioners indicated they needed support in. In England the career sector benefits from a Professional Association who has clear standards for practice, a code of ethical practice and a framework of qualifications to support practice. This is not the case in all partner countries and research participants in some countries indicated that they lack of confidence in understanding the standards required.

Most participants indicated that they would welcome opportunities to develop their professional skills and knowledge however there were barriers to this, namely a lack of resources for continuing professional development, money and time allocated for such activities.

The research demonstrated that the areas which practitioners wished to receive more training in were in the use of digital technologies and career and labour market information. Practitioners indicated that there preferred modes for continuing professional development activities are:

- Face to face training providing practical activities aimed at sharing practice
- E-learning through MOOCS and platform-based activities
- Seminars
- International study visits
- Visits to employers representing a wide range of industrial sectors
- Conferences

Recommendations

16. Review the programmes for the initial and continuing professional development of career development practitioners in a broad range of practice areas including the use of digital technology and career and labour market information.
17. Develop resources including face to face and digital approaches which facilitate the continuing professional development of career development practitioners.

Implications for MYFUTURE training and development activities

New programmes will need to address:

- The use of digital technology to support practice
- The development and use of career and labour market information.

Conclusions

This research set out to explore the way in which career guidance is delivered in schools and colleges in the countries of Italy, Denmark, England, Malta and Romania. And the corresponding training needs of career guidance practitioners. The research is intended to inform the development of digital resources to support continuing professional development.

The research utilised a framework of benchmarks which have been constructed through international research and best practice. The findings of the research indicated that there are development needs in all areas of career guidance provision, but these needs are not consistent across all partner countries. The research indicates that each country has examples of good and interesting practice which all European practitioners can benefit from. The key findings are that

- In all countries, practitioners require support to lead and manage career guidance programmes in schools and colleges. The skills and knowledge required to do this effectively go beyond those required for guidance activities and include such activities as the development of strategies and policies, managing budgets and dealing with the necessary monitoring, review and evaluation activities required for such high-level activities.
- There are no consistent models of delivery for career guidance however all countries indicated that schools and colleges in rural and isolated areas are considerably disadvantaged compared to their counterparts in urban affluent areas. Staff in rural and isolated schools identify a lack of resources as the most significant barrier to the provision of good career guidance. Digital technology may offer a solution however, practitioners required additional training to use technology effectively to deliver career guidance.
- Career guidance practitioners supplement centrally produced career and labour market information with that which they have produced themselves and need training in how to do this effectively.
- The provision of career and labour market information is limited in some countries due to a lack of access to online provision. It is important to recognise that information on the internet is still largely in English and this does present a barrier for young people in some countries. Access to ICT equipment is also a barrier for some. Whilst this research cannot address systemic problems, it is important to highlight that even with excellent training in the use of ICT, practitioners will still be hampered in their practice if there is a lack of ICT equipment and access to the internet.
- Targeting of career guidance is widespread although the process of selecting students to receive career guidance varies. In some countries this is done through a centralised process using pupil level data. In other countries this is done through a process of leaner centred activities for example through an interest questionnaire. The types of students who receive career guidance varies between countries. All countries target young people with SEND and those who are vulnerable. Some countries target gifted and talented students although this is rare.

- Referral processes are generally poorly articulated, lack clarity and consistency and are rarely monitored or reviewed.
- All countries provide some careers education, but the model of delivery varies between schools, colleges and by country. In most countries, lessons are supplemented by extra-curricular activities.
- Across the partner countries there was evidence that career learning was embedded within most curriculum subjects however there was an emphasis on STEM subjects in England.
- Schools and colleges reach out to stakeholders in order to enrich their career guidance provision. The range of stakeholders is extensive and includes public private and third sector organisations, employers and employer organisations, parents and alumni. The coordination and management is often poorly defined and there is little attempt to strategies stakeholder and particularly employer engagement.
- All partner countries provided evidence of young people being exposed to further and higher education opportunities. Young people reflected that visits to institutions were very helpful in supporting their career decision making.
- Personal guidance is provided by all partner countries but there are variations in who receive it and the models of delivery.
- All countries have a training programme which results in a qualification to deliver personal guidance however the entry criteria and level of qualification varies. There are a range of opportunities for teachers to develop their knowledge and skills in order to deliver more effective career learning. These vary from formal programmes, in service training, information bulletins and newsletters.
- Career guidance practitioners are making increasing use of digital technology to deliver their services. This is a growing phenomenon and whilst practitioners in partner countries are not all using technology to the same extent, there is a recognition that this is an area where practitioners need further development.
- Most participants indicated that they would welcome opportunities to develop their professional skills and knowledge however there were barriers to this, namely a lack of resources for continuing professional development, money and time allocated for such activities.
- The research demonstrated that the areas which practitioners wished to receive more training in were in the use of digital technologies and career and labour market information. Practitioners indicated that there are a wide range of preferred options for receiving continuing professional development.

Recommendations

The research has indicated many areas which require development. These are summarised below.

1. Practitioners and those that have management responsibility for career guidance in schools need to understand and reflect on the knowledge, skills and attributes required to effectively manage school-based programmes of career guidance. This should

result in a clearer identification of individual training needs and a programme of training and development to help equip them for their relevant roles.

2. Practitioners and managers will need to explore how the new quality framework can be used as a tool for the monitoring, review and evaluation of their programmes.
3. Practitioners and managers will need to explore the potential for using digital technology for addressing the disadvantage experienced by those in rural and isolated areas.
4. Career development practitioners will need to advocate for more effective and accessible national web portals and resources where they are lacking. These should meet the information needs of clients and practitioners and include a range of approaches including web portals, paper-based resources and the use of social media.
5. Career development practitioners need to work with managers to develop effective marketing and communication strategies which promote the availability of career and labour market information.
6. The processes and criteria which are used for targeting career guidance services need to be transparent and communicated widely to all stakeholders.
7. Resources and training should be developed which ensures that appropriate differentiated approaches are adopted.
8. Career development practitioners and their managers should develop appropriate referral systems which to identify clients' needs, ensure that resources are used effectively and maximise the agency of clients.
9. Materials to support careers educators to create innovative learning experiences (for learners from aged 5) both in discrete and embedded activities across the curriculum should be developed.
10. Strategies for parental engagement should be developed to ensure that where possible, parents can engage in strategic discussions about career guidance provision and make contributions in resources to support their children's schools and colleges.
11. Organisations should review their approaches to alumni engagement. This will ensure that schools can make the most of the inspiration that past pupils can provide to existing learners. Alumni often wish to invest in their old schools and can provide a useful source of financial and practical resources.
12. Organisations should review the management and coordination of stakeholder activities to ensure that is coherent across the organisation.
13. Although this area of career development is done well across partner countries there is some merit in exploring how digital technology can support students understanding of further and higher education offers. This is particularly important for young people in rural and isolated areas where regular visits to colleges and universities might be difficult to organise and resource.
14. The provision of continuing professional development training should be aligned to the new European quality standards for careers education.
15. Quality standards for delivering personal guidance to young people should be developed to ensure that there is consistency in provision.
16. Review the programmes for the initial and continuing professional development of career development practitioners in a broad range of practice areas including the use of digital technology and career and labour market information.

17. Develop resources including face to face and digital approaches which facilitate the continuing professional development of career development practitioners.

Implications for MYFUTURE training and development activities

The research set out to identify the key and critical issues which needed to be addressed through the training and development activities provided by the MTFUTURE project. New programmes will need to address:

- The management of career guidance programmes in secondary schools
- Using the quality framework to support monitoring, review and evaluation of school-based career programmes
- The application of new technology to address the inequalities experienced by young people in rural and isolated communities
- The development of career and labour market information and resources in a variety of formats.
- The development of marketing and communicating strategies to promote and inform clients of the services available.
- The use of social media to inform and advise clients.
- How to target resources to ensure equity and social justice
- Different approaches to supporting clients with a variety of needs
- Effective processes of referral
- Approaches to monitoring, review and evaluation of the effectiveness of targeted services.
- How to create and deliver meaningful and innovative career development activities which are focussed on developing career management skills from an early age.
- Different approaches to engaging parents
- Ways of developing and sustaining alumni networks
- Strategic approaches to stakeholder engagement
- Digital solutions to provide learners with knowledge and understanding of further and higher education opportunities.
- Good practice in providing personal guidance
- The use of digital technology to support practice
- The development and use of career and labour market information.

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Appendix 1: Research participants

Focus group participants

Each partner conducted two local focus groups (one with students and one with teachers and guidance practitioners) to collect information, needs, experiences and proposals on career choices and career guidance provision. Each partner then produced detailed notes from each focus group which were then collated and analysed thematically. The following table shows the research participants by country.

Table 1: Focus group participants

Participant type	Denmark	Italy	Malta	Romania	UK (combined data)
Learners					
11 years old			1		2
12 years old					5
13 years old			1		
14 years old	6			5	
15 years old			4	2	2
16 years old			1	1	6
17 years old			2		
Total	6	59	9	8	15
Practitioners					
Professional career guidance practitioners	3			6	3
Careers development practitioner in an education setting					2
Subject teacher					1
Researchers				2	
Student Career counsellor				1	
Associate professor				1	
Total	3	51	7	10	6

Survey respondents

Responses were received from all five partner countries. Eighty-four responses were received from England (this comprised responses from Derbyshire and Hertfordshire), 45 from Romania, 31 from Italy, 21 from Malta and 17 from Denmark giving a sample size of N = 198. Respondents most commonly fell in to the 40-49 age group (see Figure 1); large numbers also fell into the 30-39 and 50-59 age groups, but smaller numbers fell into the 20-29 and 60+ age groups. Two thirds of respondents were female.

Figure 1: Frequency of respondents from the partner countries

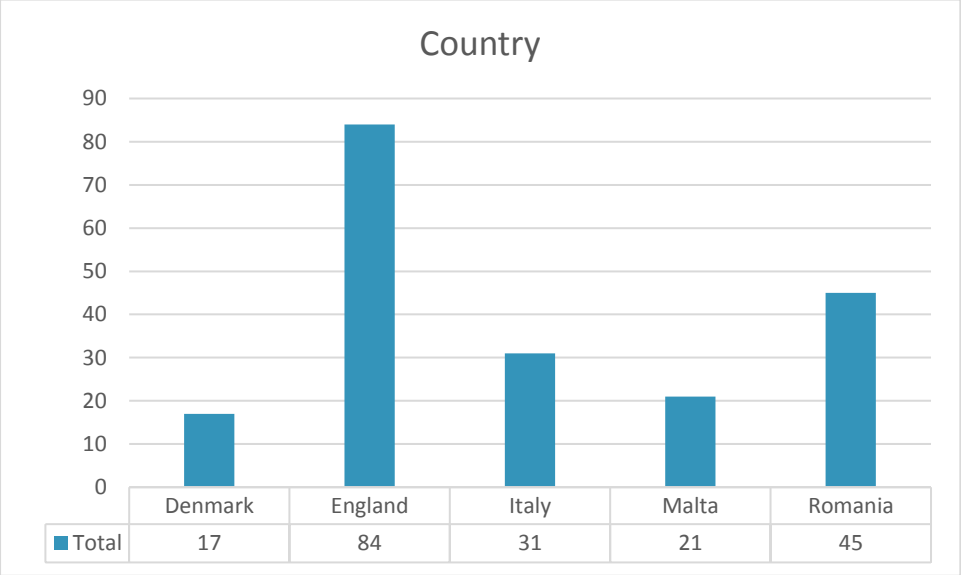


Figure 2: Age groups of respondents

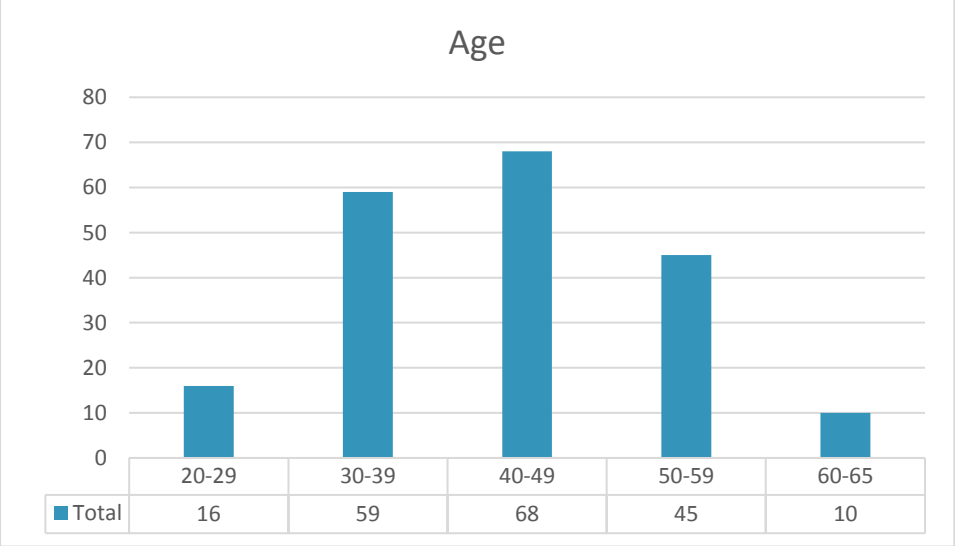
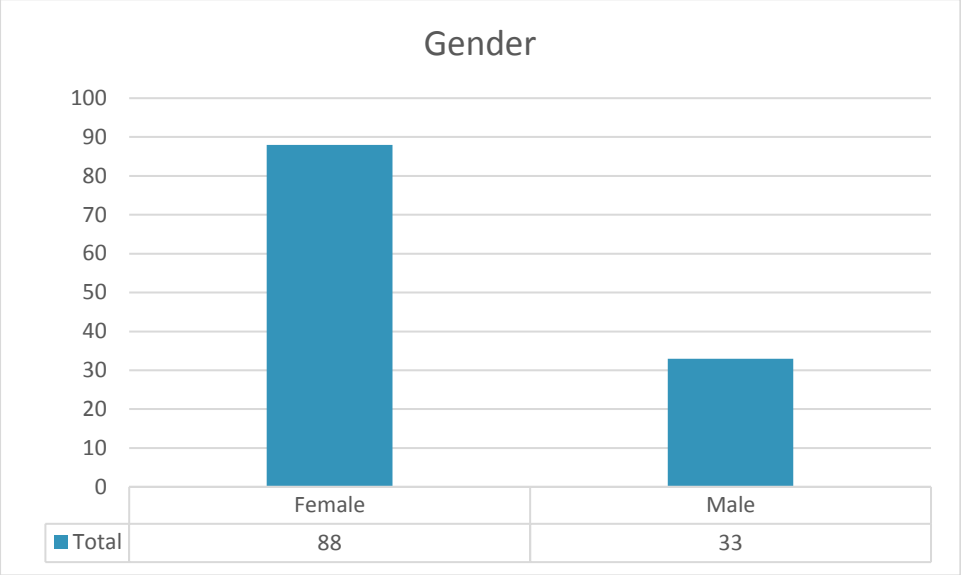


Figure 3: Gender



The working contexts of survey participants

Respondents worked in wide range of organisations (see Figure 4) with the vast majority working in multiple organisations. Thirty-eight respondents worked across multiple kinds of educational organisations – academic, vocational and technical organisations – and the same number of people worked across different levels of educational organisations – primary, secondary and further/higher education. A further 22 people reported that they worked in multiple kinds of organisations meaning they worked both in educational organisations (academic and vocational/technical, various levels) and in other kinds of organisations such as local authorities/councils or private organisations who specialise in CIEAG for different groups of individuals (e.g. school pupils, community groups, adult learners, young people not in education, employment or training (NEET)). Fewer individuals worked solely in one organisation or one *kind* of organisation; where this occurred this was typically either in secondary education or a local authority/council. Significantly fewer numbers of individuals worked solely in primary level education (5), further/higher education (4), research (3), in government (3), for a specialist CEIAG organisation (3) or in secondary vocational education (2). In terms of how career guidance services were provided, there were roughly similar numbers of commissioned respondents compared to those who worked directly for the organisation(s) (see Figure 5).

Figure 4: Organisations worked in

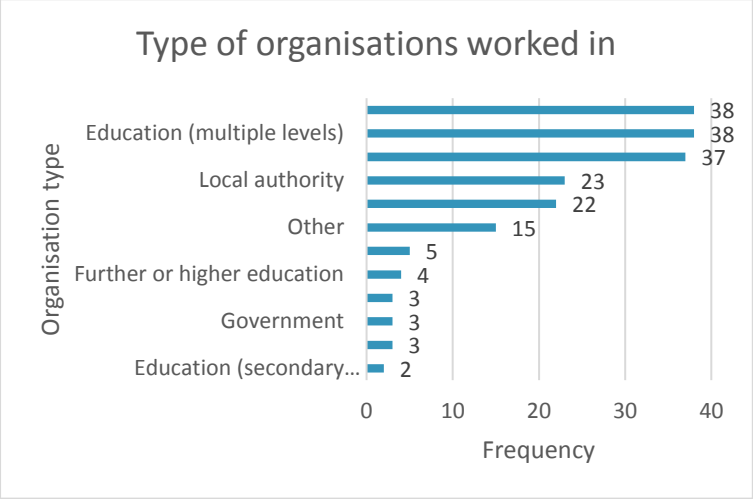
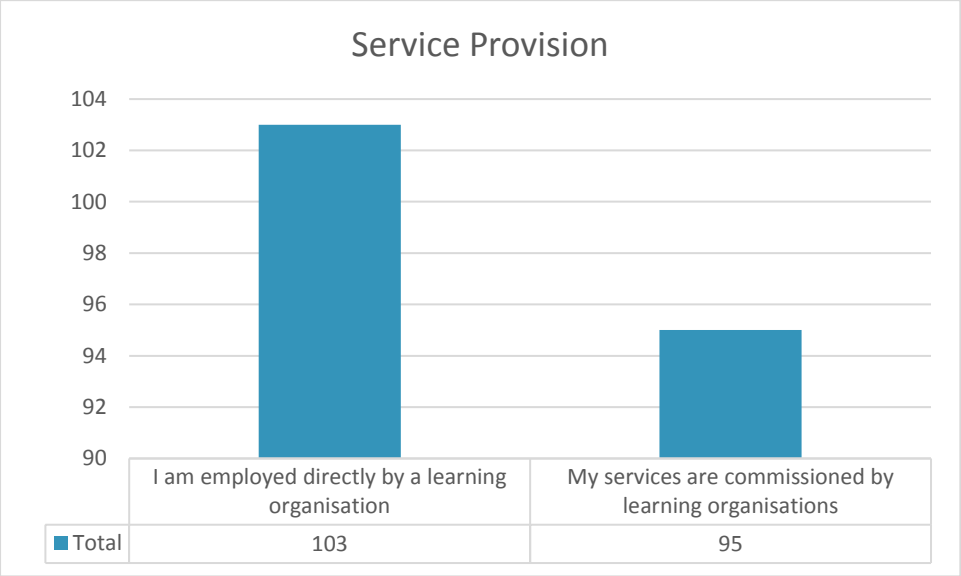


Figure 5: Service provision by respondents



Of the roles held by respondents, the vast majority worked as career advisers or counsellors (148) – see Table 1. A further 20 respondents were teachers (of academic subjects) and 10 were both teachers of academic subjects and were also careers advisers/counsellors.

Table 1: Job Roles

Job Roles	Frequency
Career Adviser Team leader	1
Career guidance teacher	1
Educational Officer (Career Guidance)	1
Librarian or information specialist	1
Teach in a University and am a Education Officer for Personal, Social and Career Development Subject	1
School counsellor	1
Team Leader	1
Teacher of vocational programmes	3
Researcher	3
Teacher of academic and vocational subjects	4
Teacher of academic subjects and a careers adviser or counsellor	10
Teacher of academic subjects	20
Careers adviser or counsellor	148

The activities undertaken were varied (see Figure 6) and nearly all respondents undertook more than one kind of activity (only 11 spent all their time on one activity). The most commonly undertaken activity was face to face guidance in a one to one setting (178 respondents reported this was an activity they undertook). This was followed by group guidance (n=166), whole classroom activities (n=144), information development (n=113), resource development (n=95), small teaching groups (n=89), quality assurance of career guidance (n=77) and curriculum development was least commonly cited (n=29).

Within these roles the majority of respondents were involved in career guidance activities five days a week (see Figure 7) but the numbers of those working 1 to 4 days were approximately equivalent. One participant worked only half a day a week in this capacity and 18 others spent varying amounts of time which depended on semester or number of learners.

Figure 6: Activities undertaken in respondent's roles

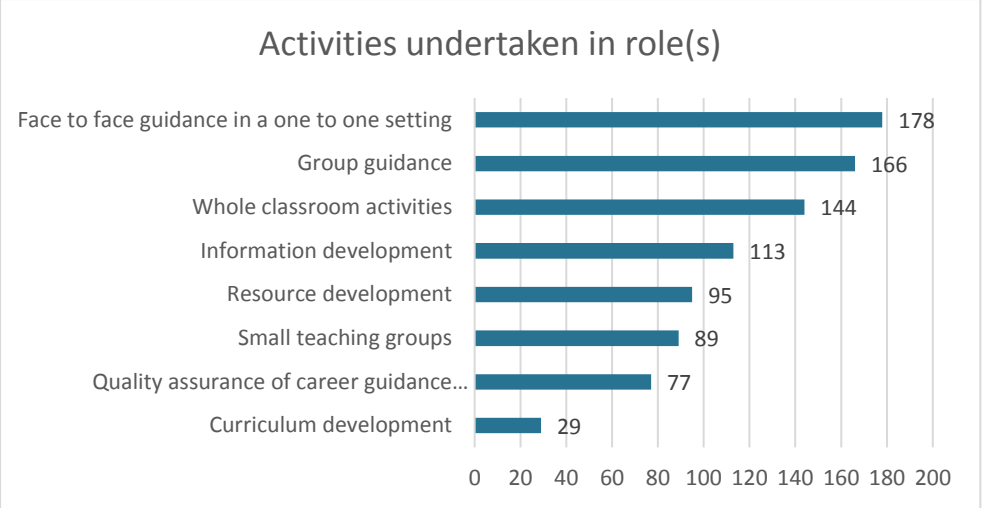
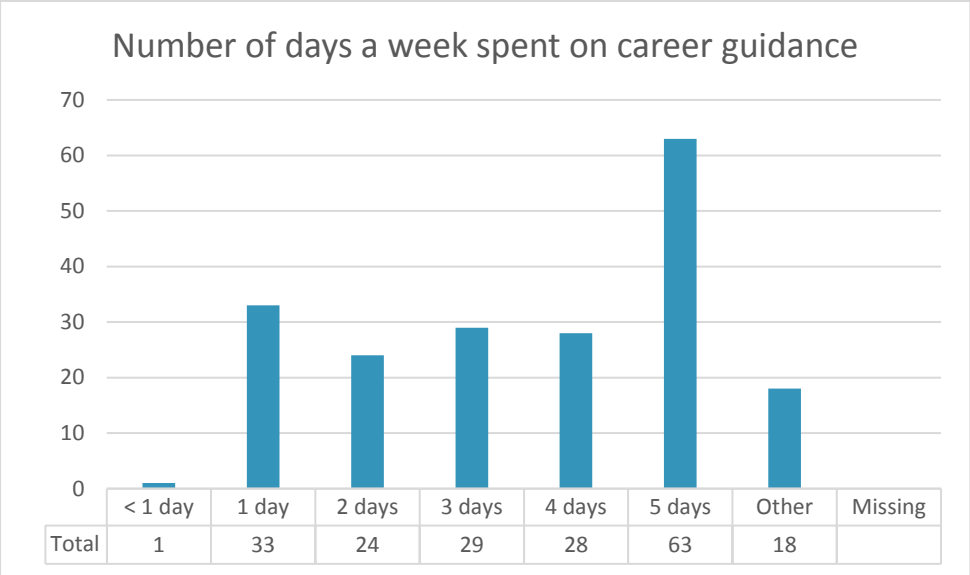


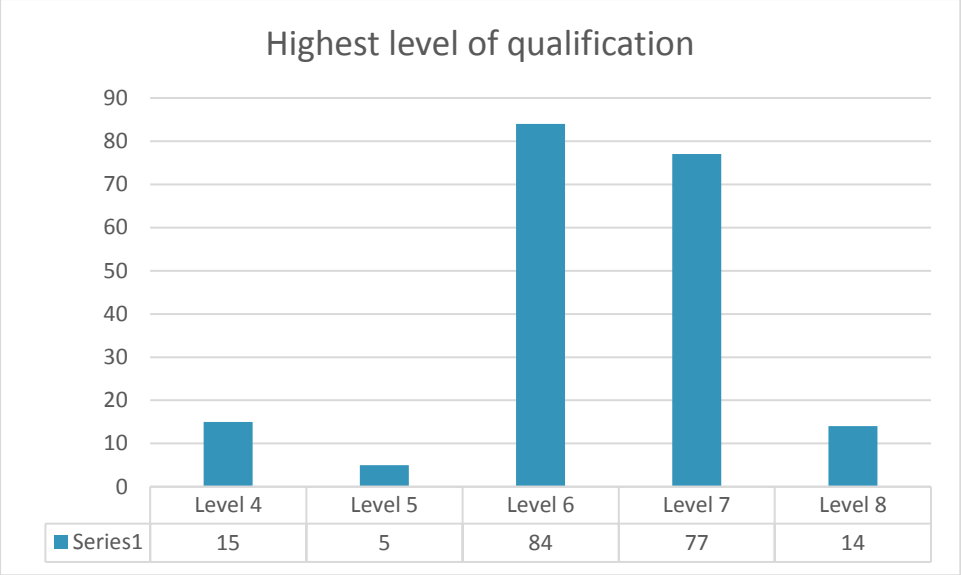
Figure 7: Number of days per week spent on career guidance



Qualifications of survey participants

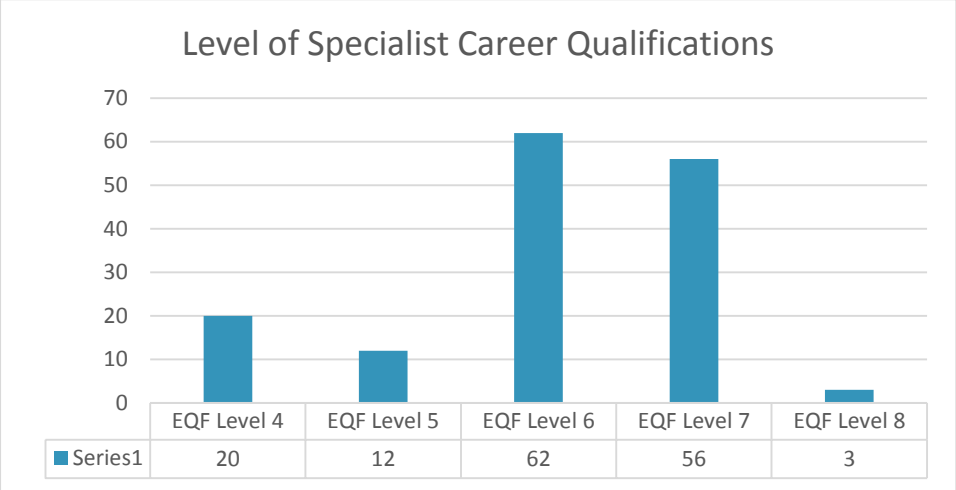
Respondents were typically qualified to level 6 (undergraduate degree level, n=84) or level 7 (postgraduate/Master's degree level, n=77) although some had achieved a Ph.D. (level 8, n=14) – see Figure 8.

Figure 8: Highest level of qualification achieved



One hundred and fifty-one respondents held qualifications specifically in career guidance and of these respondents the majority were qualified to European Qualification Levels 6 (Undergraduate/ bachelor's degree level, n=62) and 7 (Masters degree level, n=53) (see Figure 9).

Figure 9: Levels of specialist career qualifications



National Differences in the working contexts of survey participants

This section of the analysis will present the differences between nationalities on the following variables:

- Working context
- Qualifications

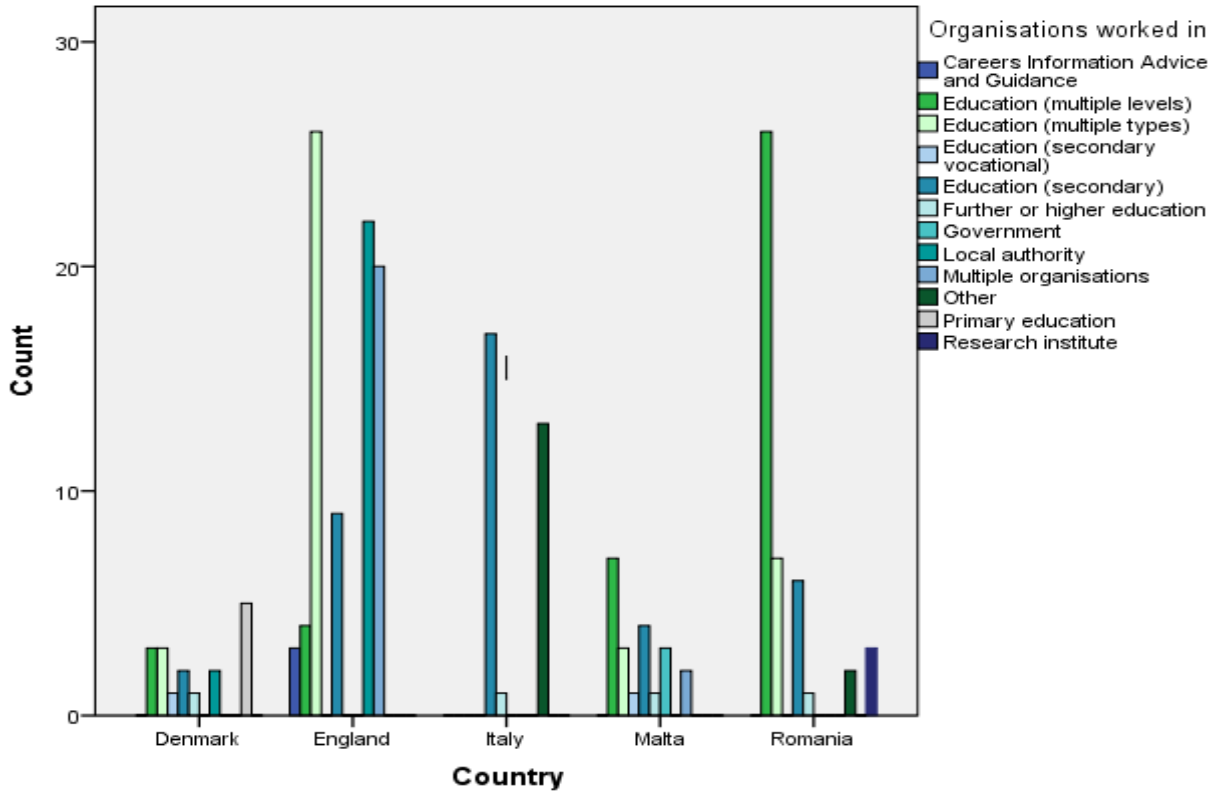
National Differences in the Working Context

Table 2 Type of organisations worked in by country

	Country				
	Denmark	England	Italy	Malta	Romania
Careers Information Advice and Guidance	0	3	0	0	0
Education (multiple levels)	3	4	0	7	26
Education (multiple types)	3	26	0	3	7
Education (secondary vocational)	1	0	0	1	0
Education (secondary)	2	9	17	4	6

Further or higher education	1	0	1	1	1
Government	0	0	0	3	0
Local authority	2	22	0	0	0
Multiple organisations	0	20	0	2	0
Other	0	0	13	0	2
Primary education	5	0	0	0	0
Research institute	0	0	0	0	3

Figure10: Organisations worked in by country



In Romania respondents worked primarily in education but across different levels. In England respondents most often worked across different kinds of educational organisations, across different organisations or for the local authority. In Italy respondents worked primarily in secondary education or 'other' organisations. Maltese respondents worked most commonly across different levels of educational organisations or solely in secondary education. Finally, Danish respondents reported working in primary education and across different levels and types of education.

One marked area of differentiation is between England and the other partner countries on how services are provided. As Figure 11 shows, respondents in England were significantly more likely to have their services commissioned as opposed to being directly employed by the learning organisation. In all partner countries respondents were more often employed directly by the organisation and it was only in Denmark where the number of individuals working directly for the organisation approximated the number whose services were commissioned. This difference in mode of service provision was found to be statistically significant – a Chi square analysis found χ (4) = 108.35, $p < .001$.

Figure 11: Mode of service provision by country

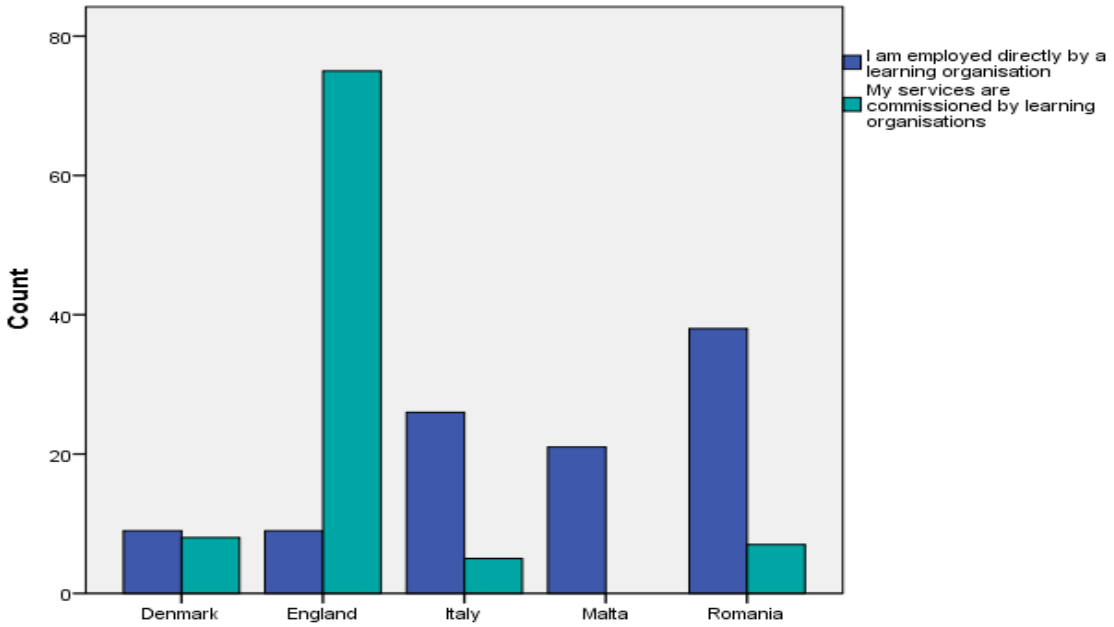


Table .3: Roles held by country

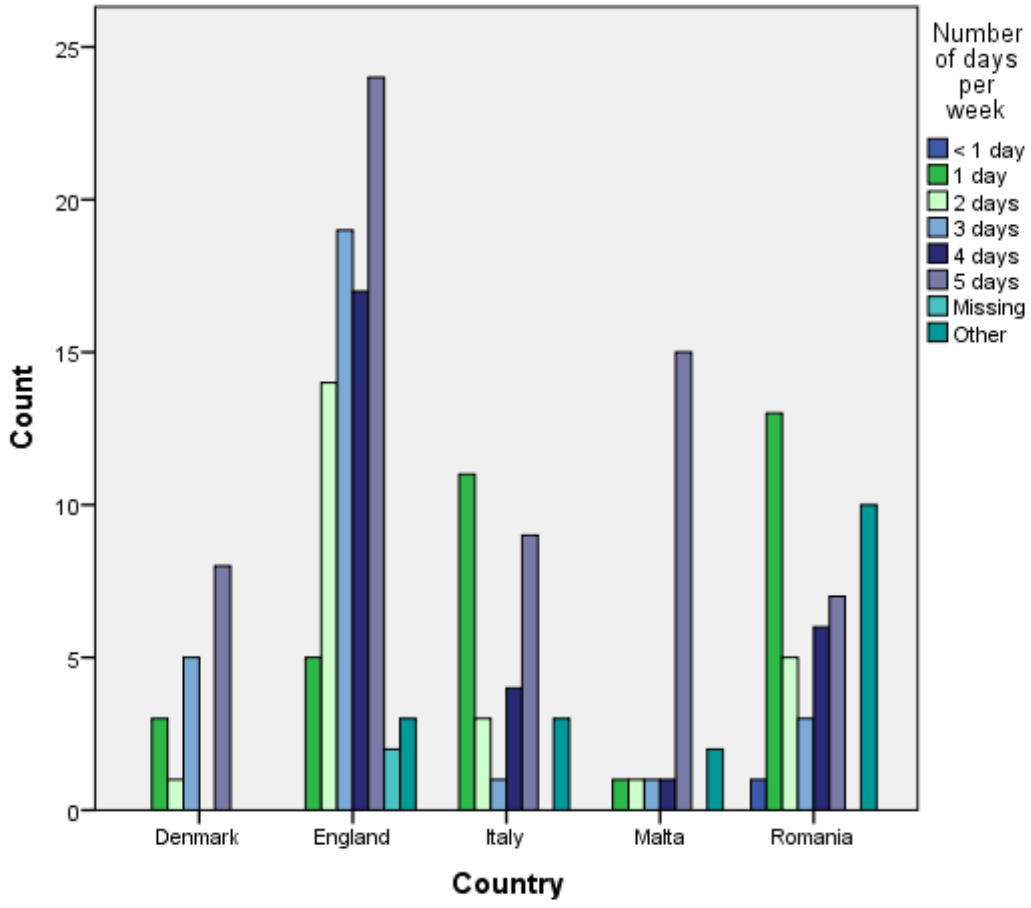
	Country				
	Denmark	**England**	**Italy**	**Malta**	**Romania**
Career Adviser Team leader	0	1	0	0	0
Career guidance teacher	0	0	0	1	0
Educational Officer (Career Guidance)	0	0	0	1	0
I am a careers adviser or counsellor	15	82	11	13	28
I am a librarian or information specialist	0	0	1	0	0
I am a teacher of vocational programmes	0	0	1	1	1
I teach academic and vocational subjects	0	0	0	0	4
I teach academic subjects	0	0	15	1	4
I teach academic subjects and I am a careers adviser or counsellor	1	0	2	3	5
I teach in a University and am a Education Officer for Personal, Social and Career Development Subject	0	0	0	1	0
Researcher	0	0	1	0	2
School counsellor	0	0	0	0	1

	Team Leader	0	1	0	0	0

Looking at the type of roles held by respondents across the different partner countries, there are two interesting findings. Firstly, the majority of respondents worked as a careers adviser or counsellor and this was true for each country except for Italy. The other interesting finding is that Italy reported a large number of individuals providing careers guidance but from their primary role as a teacher of academic subjects. The only other country where this featured was Romania although several individuals from Italy, Malta, Romania and Denmark reported working as both a careers adviser/counsellor and as a teacher of academic subjects.

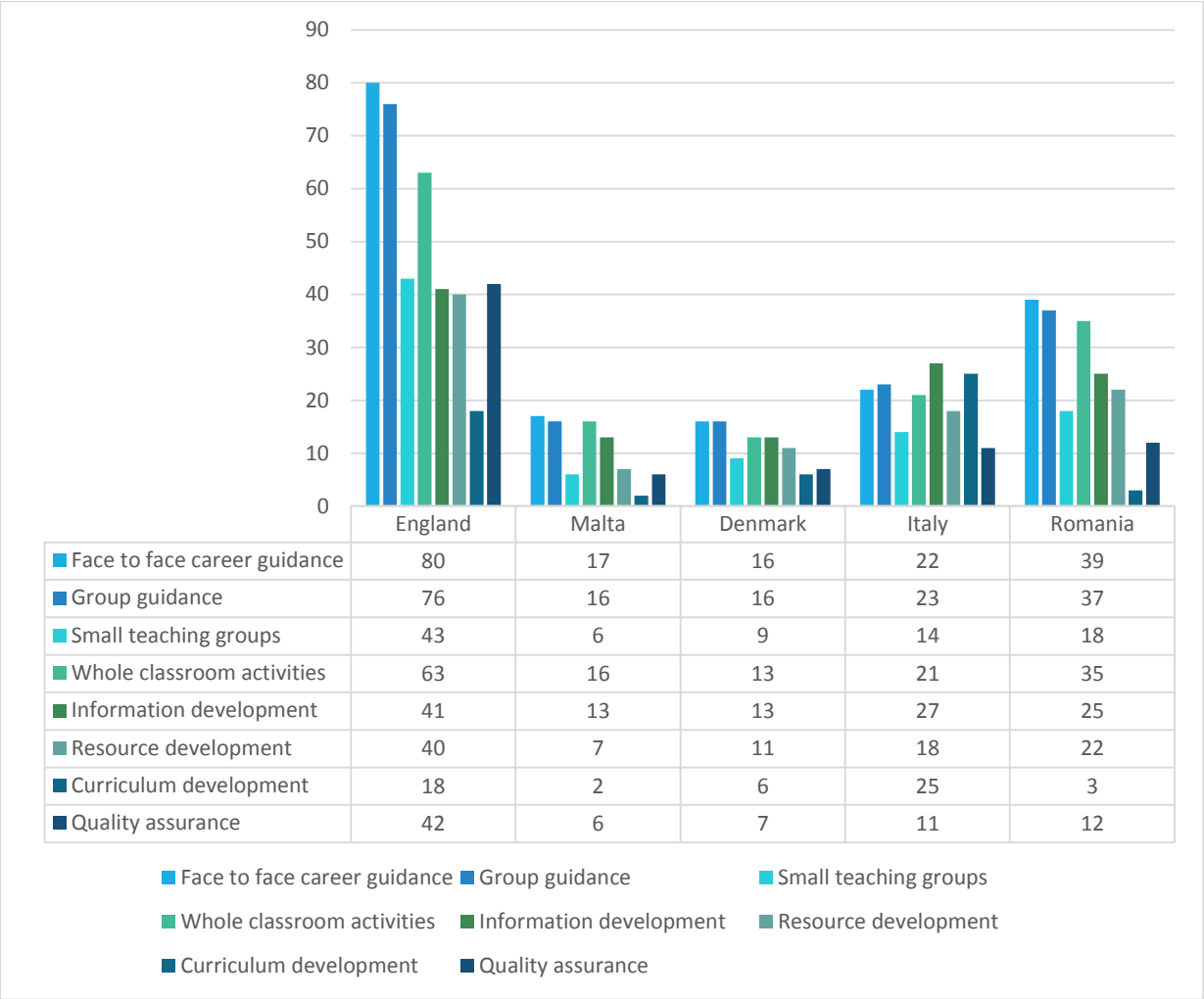
Respondents from England and Malta most commonly worked all of their working week on career guidance however in Italy and Romania they most commonly only worked one day per week on it, although several respondents form both of these countries noted they worked five days per week on it. These findings most likely reflect the different roles and ways in which services are provided across the different countries. In England services were most often commissioned so it is not surprising that respondents typically worked between 3 and 5 days a week.

Figure 12: Number of days per week spent in career guidance



The type of activities undertaken by respondents from the different countries can be seen below in Figure 13.

Figure 13: Activities undertaken by country



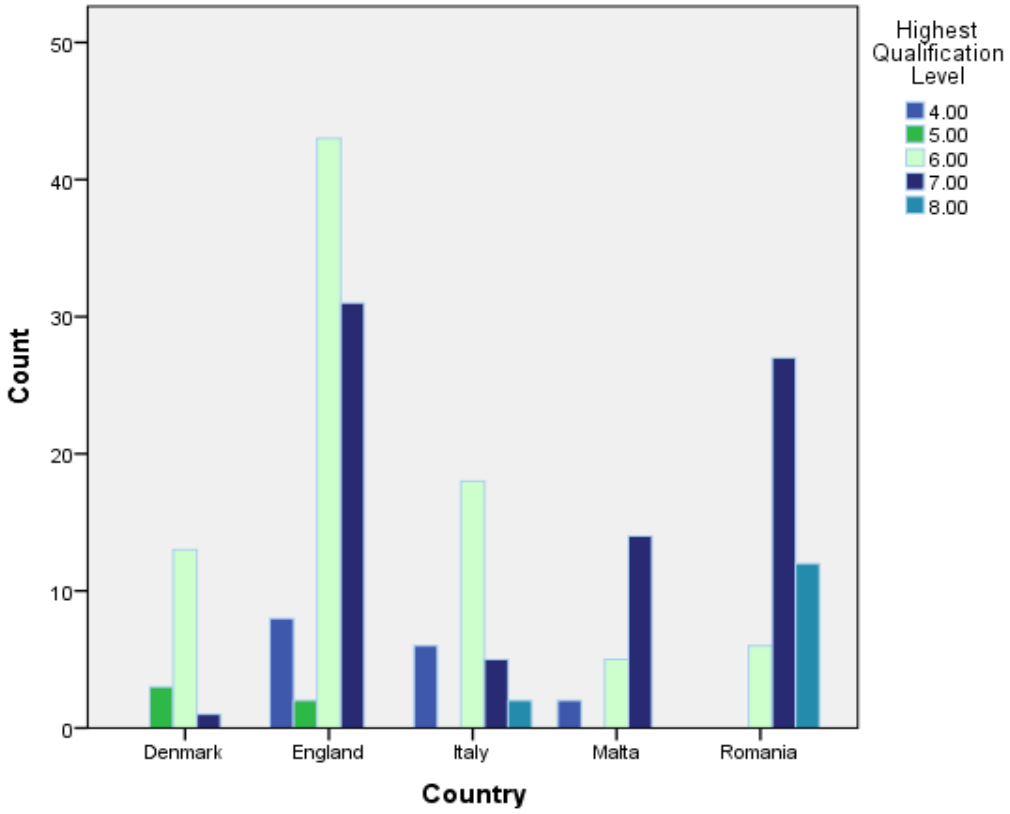
	England	Malta	Denmark	Italy	Romania
Face to face career guidance	80	17	16	22	39
Group guidance	76	16	16	23	37
Small teaching groups	43	6	9	14	18
Whole classroom activities	63	16	13	21	35
Information development	41	13	13	27	25
Resource development	40	7	11	18	22
Curriculum development	18	2	6	25	3
Quality assurance	42	6	7	11	12

Face to face one to one guidance was commonly undertaken by respondents from all countries, as was group guidance and whole classroom activities. Small teaching groups were less likely to take place but respondents from all countries were frequently engaged in developing information and resources. Curriculum development was less prevalent, particularly in Malta and Romania. Quality assurance was slightly more often undertaken in England than in other countries, particularly when compared to Malta.

National Differences in Qualifications

There was a statistically significant difference across countries in the highest levels of qualification held (these were not necessarily in career guidance) $\chi(16) = 95.557$, $p < .001$. As Figure 14 shows, Denmark, Italy and England were predominantly qualified to level 6, although England had a large number of respondents qualified to level 7 as well. Romania and Malta showed predominantly level 7 qualified respondents.

Figure 14: Highest qualification level by country



With respect to qualifications specifically in career guidance, there was again a statistically significant difference between countries in terms of how many respondents did and did not hold a specialist qualification $\chi(4) = 38.683$, $p < .001$. Figure 15 shows that in Malta, England Romania the trend is for respondents to hold specialist career guidance qualifications whereas in Denmark and Italy the number of respondents holding and not holding specialist qualifications approximated each other.

For those respondents who did hold specialist career guidance qualifications, Figure 16 shows the different European Qualification Framework (EQF) levels at which these were held, by country. In England and Denmark respondents were most commonly qualified to EQF level 6 where as in Italy and Malta it was EQF level 5 and in Romania EQF level 7.

Figure 15: Specialist Career Guidance Qualifications Held by Country

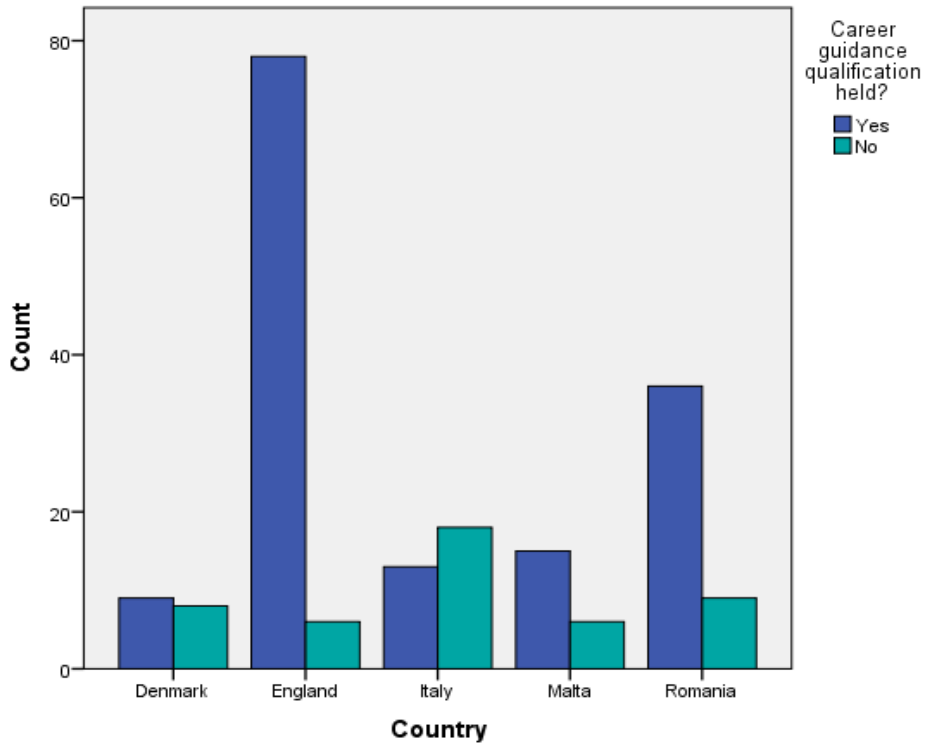
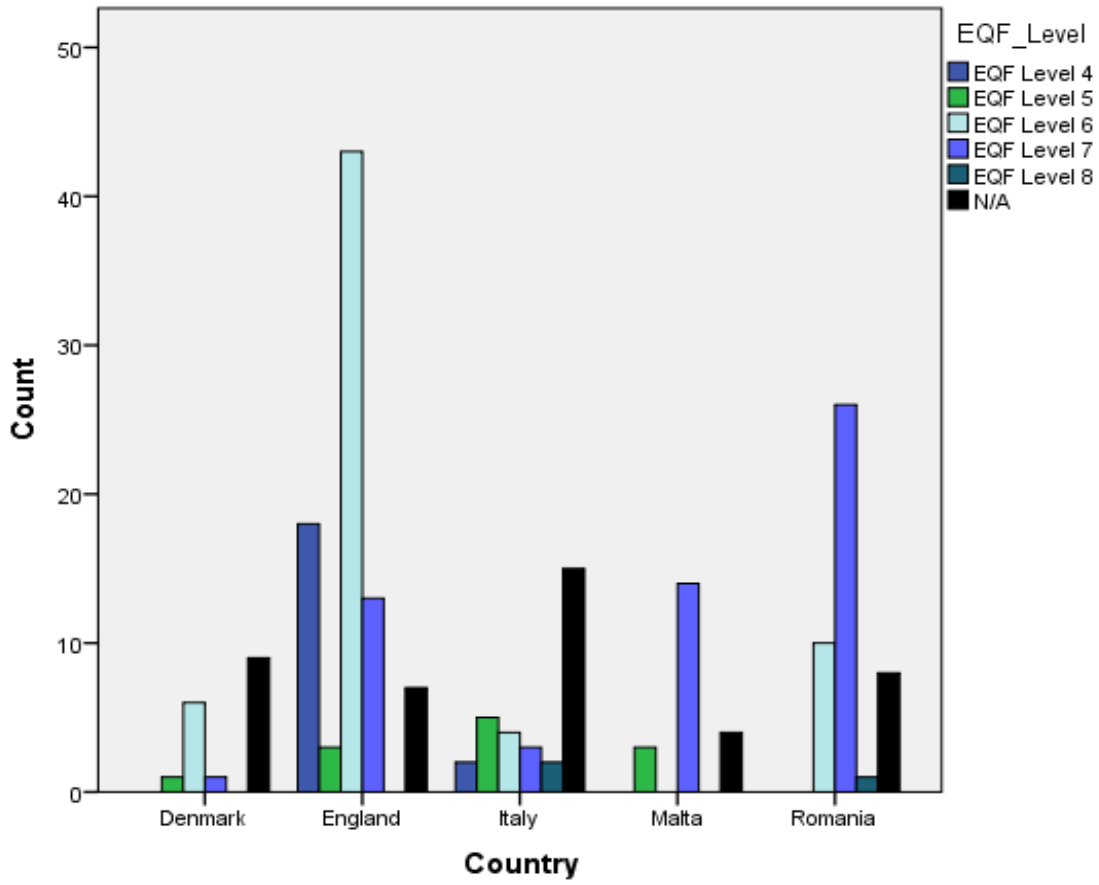


Figure 16: Specialist Qualification EQF Levels by Country



Appendix 2: Macro- economic conditions in partner countries

Denmark

The Danish economy is now at the same level as before the financial crisis in 2008. The yearly growth of BNP is nearly 3 % pr. Year. The positive development is primarily taking place in the private sector. In 2017 the export is expected to raise 4,4 % compared to 2016. The growth in the private sector is the highest since 2006. In terms of employment rate, we see that from 2013-2016 145.000 more people were employed in the private sector while 5.000 less people were employed in the public sector. This development is predicted to continue in the years to come.

The tide has turned when it comes to outsourcing in the private sector. We saw a large number of companies outsourcing a number of tasks in the 1990´s and the 00es – now we see more and more companies insourcing. This puts pressure on the ability to educate the new generations to new jobs and new skills which are sought for by the private sector. At the moment we experience that companies must turn down orders because of lack of workers with the necessary skills and education.

As a consequence of that the Danish Government has introduced a number of reforms in the educational system and labour market in Denmark. The target of the reforms are as follows:

- More young people should go in to vocational education
- More young people should follow STEM studies – science, technology, engineering and mathematics
- More young people should complete their studies faster and in an earlier age
- Better possibilities to gain employability for the existing working force – through education and training courses
- Prevention of early retirement and more flexibility on the labour market

Social mobility

Although the large Danish investment in free education and pre-school programs does not result in all unskilled children receiving higher education, the effect of the investment is far from zero. The cognitive skills of children from low-income families are apparently enhanced by the Danish system: Children from the lower societies in Denmark are clearly better in international math and reading tests than similar American children. This lift to vulnerable children is one of the crucial elements of meeting the ends of the Danish model. Children with better skills are able to make more money once they get into the labour market, and many of them will earn significantly more money by working than they can get in public service - which is crucial to achieve a high employment rate.

The long-term challenge is that equal opportunity in Denmark does not largely result in children from low-income families educating up to society in education. This may mean that we cannot raise the general level of qualifications as much as we could - provided that we have relevant high-quality education to offer people who would otherwise remain unskilled. Denmark

therefore has a weaker productivity and thus prosperity development than otherwise. It could make it difficult for Denmark to maintain the position among the richest countries in the world, and it is less attractive for a country to be very equal if the country is not very rich either.

England

Since the financial crisis of 2008 and the ensuing recession, the U.K. has made a slow but steady recovery in levels of output, with the economy finally reaching the size it had been before the recession in the second quarter of 2013. It wasn't until 2015 however that GDP per head returned to roughly its pre-recession level (Jackson, Tetlow, Bernard & Pearson, 2017). The macro-economic priorities of the current government have been to reduce the deficit, increase productivity, raise living standards and create economic growth; these have been partially realised. There has been a steady performance by the UK economy in 2016 with the rate of growth the second fastest among the G7 economies and despite the negative predictions surrounding Brexit, growth in the sixth months following the EU referendum has actually been significantly stronger than anticipated.

Within the UK economy, the services sector shows the most growth, accounts for almost 80 per cent of GDP and is one of the few segments of the economy to have surpassed its pre-recession peak (Jackson et al. 2017). Price Waterhouse Coopers (PwC; a multinational professional services network and auditing firm) predict that the service sector will continue to grow albeit at a slower rate (https://www.pwc.co.uk). Construction however may suffer from lower investment levels. Manufacturing and services exporters should benefit from the weaker pound.

One of the key successes over the last 12-24 months has been the UK's rapidly falling unemployment rate, underpinned originally by part-timers and the self-employed, the growth in employment rates is now also due to an increase in the number of full time employees (Jackson et al. 2017). However, the rate of employment has slowed considerably and it is not accompanied by a similar increase in real wages which are recovering at a much slower rate.

The latest data from the labour force survey (https://www.gov.uk) shows that the number of young people participating in education, employment or training continues to climb; the proportion of young people not in education, employment or training (NEET) decreased slightly for the 19-24 and 16-24 age groups and remained the same for the 16-18 age group in the period October to December 2016. The 16-18 NEET rate remained the same at 6.6%, the 19-24 NEET rate fell by 0.4 percentage points (to 13.4%) from the comparable quarter in 2015 and the overall 16-24 NEET rate fell by 0.3 percentage points (to 11.3%). However, several sectors report difficulties in filling positions (e.g. UKCES, 2015; EEF, 2016; www.imeche.org, 2016) and there is a mismatch between young people's career aspirations and the reality of UK job market (City & Guilds, 2016). The future labour market will look quite different to todays; for example, PwC predict that approximately 30% of existing UK jobs could be automated by the early 2030s. This is most probable for the retail and wholesale, transport and storage, and manufacturing sectors with less educated workers most at risk of losing work to automation. Whilst these new technologies might increase productivity, wealth and spending and create jobs in service sectors that are less easy to automate, they could also increase income

inequality. PwC argue that the Government needs to respond by reshaping education and vocational training to help workers adapt to this fast-evolving technological world.

Social Mobility

In its broadest sense social mobility refers to the movement of people within or between social strata resulting in a change in social status. Social mobility may be absolute (generally meaning an upward movement in economic growth) or relative (rank movements up or down income distribution relative to previous generations, Harvey, 2016).

In 2004, The Sutton Trust published a report suggesting that social mobility in the UK had declined during the period of 1958-1970. However, later updates suggest these findings were particular just to that time frame and the data itself has been heavily criticised by others (e.g. Goldthorpe, 2013). A number of efforts have been made to gauge social mobility in the UK and in comparison to other countries, often using intergenerational income (or earnings) elasticity as an indicator. This is an often-applied measure that looks at the extent to which fathers' and sons' earnings are correlated. Typically, it is found that Scandinavian countries demonstrate the greatest mobility and the UK, USA and Italy demonstrate significantly less mobility, due in part to differences in demographics and in part to differences in social support systems (Harvey, 2016). However, Goldthorpe (2013) argues that if different measures or indicators of social mobility are used, for example social class mobility (which he argues is better able to capture "the intergenerational transmission of economic advantage and disadvantage" p.431), then the only notable changes to have occurred are that the absolute rate at which the middle classes have been upwardly mobile has slowed down and levelled out.

The Skills Agenda

Until very recently the UK had a Commission for Employment and Skills (UKCES) which was founded in response to a recommendation from Lord Leitch's 2006 skills review. The commission aimed to "identify the UK's optimal skills mix in 2020 to maximise growth, productivity and social justice" (UKCES, 2016, p.14). It was founded in 2008, shortly before the financial crisis hit. In response to the crisis the government commissioned UKCES to produce recommendations on how to improve the post-19 education and training options in England. The findings suggested a strong need for:

- Simplifying the skills landscape
- Putting the customer – employer or learner – at the heart of the system
- Providing clear information on the quality of provision and the impact of skill development

However, as previously discussed, there are still existing and significant skills shortages in the UK across a range of sectors and this is likely to be exacerbated in the future with a mismatch between young people's career aspirations and the reality of the UK future labour market (City & Guilds, 2016). UKCES (2015) note that the most marked area of shortages is among machine operatives and that skilled trades remained the occupation with the highest density

of skill shortage vacancies. Skill shortage vacancies across sectors were the result of shortages in a range of skills including people and personal skills (particularly time management, management & leadership, sales and customer skills) as well as technical and practical skills including complex analytical skills and skills related to operational aspects of roles (UKCES, 2015).

Development Zones

Since 2011/12 the UK government has been creating and developing Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEP's) and Enterprise Zones to foster business and economic development across the nation. LEP's are voluntary partnerships between local authorities and businesses set up to foster and achieve local economic priorities, economic growth and job creation. In England enterprise zones offer tax breaks and government support to businesses looking to set and operate within the zone. This comprises benefits such as superfast broadband in the region, simplified planning permission for specific developments and business rate discounts. At the community level enterprise zones are able to drive forward local economies and at a national level may help to attract foreign investment, bringing jobs and productivity.

Italy

The crisis in Italy

The effect of financial crisis of 2008 and the ensuing recession has been particularly persistent in Italy. While in other European countries national GDPs have already reached the size they had been before the recession, Italian GDP is expected to reach pre-crisis levels only in mid 2020s (ISTAT, Rapporto annuale 2017; Banca d'Italia, Relazione finale 2017). Nevertheless, since 2015, Italy has gone through a crisis recovery process and, in 2016, has reported a GDP rise of +0.9%, which was mainly driven by internal demand in terms of consumption growth and gross fixed capital formation (transports and machineries, ISTAT, Rapporto annuale 2017).

This slow recovery process serves out the long protracted stagnation of productivity between 2000 and 2014, the lack of strategic investments in technical efficiency and technological improvements and low employment rates.

In 2016, the capacity of Italian industries to compete in international markets seemed to depend on a strong selection process that took place during the crisis. The production sector was reshaped and only financial companies that were solid, technically efficient and open to international markets managed survive the crisis.

This was particularly the case of the improvements in the Italian manufacturing sector. On the other hand, compared to European competitors, the sector of services did not go through this process and its development seems to be still strongly impacted by the delay in the use of technology and of high-quality standards.

Employment

Consistently with other European countries, employment rates are growing and reached +0.9% during the last year. Employment rates are growing for each age group and this is also true for young people between 15 and 34 (+0.7% compared to 2015 but still -10% compared to 2008; ISTAT, Rapporto annuale 2017) who were the age group that was penalised the most during the crisis. This growth is also particularly strong for people with higher education (+1.3% compared to 2015) and this confirms the protective role of education for job placement. Moreover, this growth seems to involve every area of Italy even if strong discrepancies in employment rates are still present (60% in the North versus 43.3% in the South).

In line with Europe, this growth regards all the different forms of work (especially part-time jobs) and 95% of this growth seems to be concentrated in the services sector. The number of employees in industries has also increased, while employment rates in constructions are decreasing.

In spite of these positive trends, it is worth noticing that the Italian rate of employment (57.2% in 2016) is still far from the European average (66.6%) and that Italy is characterised by a strong gap between male and female employment rates (13.3% in Italy).

Early School Leavers

In 2016, the average proportion of early school leavers (ESL) in Europe was 10.7%. In Italy, this proportion rises up to 13.8%. Although Italy is still at the sixth position for ESL in Europe, this proportion represents an improvement of -6% compared to 2008 (ISTAT, Rapporto Annuale 2017). The incidence of this phenomenon varies according to geographical areas and social groups. A significantly higher incidence of ESL has been reported in young people from the South and in low-income families, especially when one member is not Italian.

NEETs

In 2016, the proportion of young people (15-29) not in education, employment or training (NEET) has seen a decrease to around 2,2 million (-5.7%) but is still the highest proportion in Europe where the average is 14.2% compared to 24.3% in Italy (ISTAT, Rapporto annuale 2017). One young person out of four between 15 and 29 is in the NEET condition. This phenomenon affects low-income families in 44.5% of cases. Three quarters of this group of people are either looking for a job (43.4%) or are potential job force (32.6%), while only a quarter is not willing to work (among which we can find non-Italian young mothers with young children who are not willing to work as they struggle to handle their family and work life).

The future of the labour market

When analysing the future of the labour market, the Italian scene will have to deal with the structural effects of the digital revolution, automated processes and efficient management. Recent data from OCSE report that up to 10% of Italian employees could be replaced by automation of labour (Arntz et al., 2016). The future of the labour market is still an open

question but two plans of actions have been suggested. First, it has been argued that the Government needs to respond to these possible changes by reshaping education and vocational training to help workers adapt to this fast-evolving technological world. Second, it has been advised that high investments in ICT (information and communication technologies) done by the Government could attenuate unemployment risks associated with technological progress.

Social Mobility

In its broadest sense, social mobility refers to the movement of people within or between social strata resulting in a change in social status. Intergenerational social mobility reflects the phenomenon of economic heritability and is usually measured with the correlation between fathers' and sons' earnings. Lower social mobility tends to maintain inequality between generations (ISTAT, Rapporto annuale 2017).

While Scandinavian countries demonstrate the greatest mobility, the UK, USA and Italy demonstrate significantly less mobility, due in part to differences in demographics and in part to differences in social support systems (Harvey, 2016).

Different statistics can be done based on different measures of the family's socio-economic status (e.g. professional profile, education, or properties). In the Italian context, when using a combination of these measures of socio-economic status, children coming from a family with high socio-economic status were shown to have a 63% advantage compared to children from low socio-economic status (37% in France, 39% in Denmark, 79% in the UK and 51% in Spain; ISTAT, Rapporto annuale 2017).

The Italian educational system

Compulsory education starts from when children are 6 years of age and ends when children reach 16 years of age (Law 296, 2006). The educational system is divided into different stages (http://www.miur.gov.it/sistema-educativo-di-istruzione-e-formazione):

1. Kindergarten (3-6).
2. First cycle of education:
    a) Primary school (6-11),
    b) Lower secondary school (11-14).
3. Second cycle of education:
    a) Upper secondary school (14-19) which can be a lyceum, a technical or a professional institute,
    b) Professional training (IeFP, 14-17/14-18) managed by each region.
4. Higher education:
    a) University
    b) Higher education in Arts, Music and Dance
    c) Higher Technical Institutes (ITS)

Although State schools offer free education, parents may also choose to educate their children either at a charter school or with non-charter school or family education (according to a specific set of rules). Approximately 95% of students following primary level and secondary level education are enrolled in public schools (2014/2015; ISTAT, Studenti e scuole dell'istruzione primaria e secondaria in Italia, 2017).

Work-related experiences into the Italian education system

Compulsory work related experiences ("alternanza scuola-lavoro") is a new aspect of the Italian education system proposed in 2015 with the law 107 (L. 107/2015). The law, also known as the "Good School" legislation, promotes and introduces in the school a number of hours (200 hours for lyceums and 400 hours for technical and professional institutes, to be used during the final three years) that students spend on the workplace, as well as private and public institutions (http://www.istruzione.it/alternanza/cosa_alternanza.shtml). With this new policy, work-related experiences becomes a tool for learning and enhancing skills and students are offered structured occasions to learn about the world of work. Since 2017, this law involves 1.5 million students in Italy.

This model aims at reducing school dropout and at favouring not only professional development but also across-the-board skills, creativity, ethics of responsibility, and teamwork. This new scheme consists of different modules and these modules can take place either in the classrooms or in the external workspaces. Compared to internships and stages, these learning at the workspace experiences are characterised by a well-structured training agenda and are the result of a joint educational commitment of both schools and external workspaces.

The role of career guidance in Italy

In a society characterised by high unemployment rates, high incidence of NEETs and ESLs, career guidance polices play a pivotal role. There is a long tradition of career guidance in Italy.

In the past, the majority of activities were dedicated to young people and organized within the schools and within the vocational training systems. Since 1997, most guidance services for young and adult people were included in employment policies and provided by the Public Employment Services at the regional and local level (Decree 469/97 – Decentralization of employment services through the transfer of responsibilities from the state to the regions and – in particular - to the Provinces).

Only in recent years, Italy has defined a national lifelong guidance system and issued National Guidelines (2013), agreed between the Government and the Regions that, according to the Constitution, since 2001 hold this institutional function. The National Guidelines establish the right of Lifelong Guidance for all citizens and define five main functions of guidance:

1) To offer Career Education via learning Career Management Skills (CMS).

2) To meet the information needs of citizens and guidance stakeholders with reliable information resources.

3) To support transitions, to provide help and advice to citizens to reach learning and career goals and to manage the process of change.

4) To provide guidance counselling aimed at supporting the design of a career lifespan.

5) Functions of management of system. To develop networks and quality standards, training and updating of career guidance practitioners.

Guidance is becoming a main strategy to support the transition from education to work and to reduce Early School Leaving. Schools and Public Employment Centres are in charge of reducing early school leaving and promoting employment and training of young NEETs.

In 2014, the Ministry of Education published lifelong guidance guidelines to deepen the role of the education system within the national guidance system.

Malta

Malta has created a well-defined strategy for sustainable economic development and a number of key sectors with high growth potential are currently the focus of this strategy. These sectors include advanced manufacturing, life sciences, transport and advanced logistics, tourism, international education services, information and communication technology, financial services, and the creative industries (Malta Enterprise, 2016).

The manufacturing sector has remained highly competitive throughout the last decades by innovating its processes and products (Malta Enterprise, 2016). Although the recession, which in Malta reached a high in 2009, had an adverse impact on the manufacturing sector (along with the HORECA sector), signs of recovery were evident by 2010 (Grech & Borg, 2012). Local manufacturing has moved to high value operations and the various branches include the production of automotive components, pharmaceuticals and medical devices, electronic components and high-quality injection moulding (Malta Enterprise, 2016). Moreover, the diversification of the economy to service activities has supported economic growth, in spite of the unfavourable economic and financial context (Grech, 2016). For instance, between 2011 and 2016, the iGaming sector was the fastest growing sector (Business Agenda, 2017). Compared to other member states, Malta has developed a substantial competitive advantage in the electronic and remote gaming niches, mainly due to advantageous regulatory and tax conditions, as well as the know-how and experience accumulated in the gaming sector (EC, 2017). Other sectors which are also experiencing high growth are the consumer and tourism sectors and the professional and technical sectors (Business Agenda, 2017). The construction industry has also continued growing during recent years (Debono, 2017). For the coming years, the financial services and iGaming sectors are predicted to remain key drivers of economic growth (Business Agenda, 2017).

With regards to employment, in the last decade the proportion of employed individuals increased from around 46% (2007) to around 53% (2016) of the population (Bamber, 2017). Malta's unemployment rate in August 2017 stood at 4.2%, one of the lowest in the EU (Eurostat, 2017). Nevertheless, this growth in employment has been attributed to an increase in the activity rate of the population, rather than to a decrease in unemployment. In relation to inactivity rates, although the inactivity rate of adults is still considered high (EC, 2017), this rate has fallen to 44.3% (2016) from 51% (2007). This increase has been credited mainly to an increased rate of female entry into the labour market. In fact, specifically with regards to female inactivity, the rate has seen a decline from almost 69% (2007) to just over 56% (2016) (Bamber, 2017).

From 2011 to 2015, the youth unemployment rate dropped from 6.9 per cent to 6.1 per cent while the youth NEET rate averaged at around 10.3 per cent (NSO, 2016). Although Early School Leaving (ESL) rates have also decreased drastically, from 27.2% (2008) to 19.8% (2015), the rate is still one of the highest in the EU (EC, 2017). Information on measures which address youth who are not in education, employment or training and Early School Leavers is provided below (Section 1.1).

Social mobility

The ***Malta National Lifelong Learning Strategy 2020*** (MEDE, 2014) outlines a basic set of common principles, which include the recognition of lifelong learning as a contributor to society through social cohesion, cultural and gender diversity, equal opportunities, ***social mobility*** and citizen empowerment. This strategy emphasises the significance of accessible education, training and employment systems in order to support social mobility.

A number of measures have been implemented over the last few years with the aim of increasing the labour market participation of target groups who typically have difficulties in accessing the labour market, including parents, older workers and inactive women. The government's thrust tended to be on "Making work pay", with the majority of measures addressed to parents and those who do not work, especially those on social benefits who may have fallen prey to the welfare dependency trap. Additionally, the following measures address other issues including in-work poverty and social mobility, by providing training and upskilling opportunities to adults.

Free childcare service: In 2014, the government introduced a free childcare service to parents or guardians who work or are pursuing their education. In order to be eligible for the service, both parents need to be employed or pursuing their education. In the case of single parents/guardians, such individuals need to have full custody and care of the child and be in employment or pursuing their education. This service is a form of an income in-kind equivalent to €4,000 per child (National Strategic Policy for Poverty Reduction and for Social Inclusion, 2014).

Encouraging single parents to undergo training: In 2015, with the aim of enhancing the employment of single parents, single parents in receipt of social assistance were provided with

a credit of between 200 and 1,000 Euro upon enrolling in an intensive vocational course or else entering the education system on a full time basis to improve their skills.

Incentives for the upskilling of older workers: In 2015, the government launched a scheme to incentivise the employment and training of older workers between the ages of 45 and 65 years. With regards to upskilling, companies employing these older workers benefitted from an income tax deduction of 50% of the cost of training of these workers, up to a maximum of 400 Euro.

Provision of lifelong learning and adult learning: The Adult Learning Unit within the Directorate for Lifelong Learning (DLLL) offers lifelong learning classes for adults. Such classes are also conducted during the evening, making it possible for workers to enrol in such courses. The adult learning programme includes essential skills courses, language courses and vocational courses.

Nevertheless, in spite of the government's continued efforts, whilst progress vis-à-vis access and participation in lifelong learning has been registered, the labour market participation by low-skilled individuals is still not at the desired levels (EC, 2017).

NEETS and ESLS

Specifically with regards to young adults who are NEET, the ***Youth Guarantee Scheme*** is directed at potential school dropouts (EC, 2017). A number of preventive, support and reactive measures are being implemented including measures which:

Provide a second-chance education such as the Alternative Learning Programme' and other preventive and compensatory measures which tackle the problem of ESL (EC, 2017)

Focus on the acquisition of employability skills

Facilitate the school to work transition (MEDE, 2015a).

With regards to early school leaving, a combination of preventive, intervention and compensation measures are being implemented including the provision of flexible pathways and career guidance, the introduction of innovative teaching and learning tools for students at risk, community-based solutions, strengthening the involvement of parents, and support networks for students at risk (MEDE, 2015a).

The skills agenda

In 2016, three main government entities i.e. The National Commission for Further and Higher Education (NCFHE)[6], Jobsplus (Malta's PES) and Malta Enterprise, conducted national level

[6] The remit of the NCFHE focuses on: (1) providing accreditation to further and higher educational institutions; (2) providing accreditation to programmes or courses of studies at further and higher education levels; (3) quality assurance of both educational institutions and programmes or courses; (4) recognition of obtained national or

research (part of the Erasmus+ project “Promoting the Bologna Process in Malta 2014-2016”) with the purpose of identifying local skills shortages and gathering information on the supply and demand of occupations across all sectors of the Maltese economy.

The findings of this survey (NCFHE, 2016) reveal that the largest categories of employees in Malta consist of professional workers (16%), clerical support workers (14.55) and technicians and associate professionals (14.2%). With regards to short-term labour market demands (up to 3 years subsequent to the survey), the highest demand is projected to be for clerical support workers (24%), service and sales workers (20%), professionals (16%) and trade workers (11%).

With regards to the recruitment process, respondents provided several reasons why certain vacancies are difficult to fill. The topmost reason was a lack of applicants with the necessary skills (56.2%). The skills which respondents mentioned as lacking in applicants for hard to fill vacancies were written communication skills (32.9%), technical skills (32.1%), problem solving skills (30.9%) and team-working skills (29.3%). Other reasons mentioned were a lack of applicants with the required attitude and personality (43.7%) and a small pool of applicants (37.7%) (NCFHE, 2016).

Locally, other data also indicates that there are skills shortages predominantly in high skilled occupations across various sectors including healthcare, finance, and ICT (EC, 2017). With reference to skills level and skills shortages, the NCFHE (2016) survey revealed that 6.0% of employees are overqualified, in particular professionals (24.2%) and clerical support workers (16.5%). On the other hand, 8.0% of employees were not considered as fully proficient by their employers, in particular technicians and associate professionals (25.6%) and employees in elementary occupations (14.9%). With regards to employees deemed as not fully proficient, skills lacking included problem-solving skills (43.0%); customer handling skills (37.7%); team-working skills (34.9%) and oral communication skills (31.8%). Employers resort to a number of methods in order to tackle such skills gaps, including an increase in training (57.8%); higher staff supervision (39.8%) or reallocation work duties (25.0%).

On a national level, with regards to government intervention vis-à-vis such labour shortages, effort is being directed at bolstering initial education, including measures aimed at reducing dropouts and measures addressing upskilling and reskilling of workers and job seekers (EC, 2017). In addition, Malta’s economy relies substantially on foreign workers; in fact, thousands of foreign workers have relocated to Malta over the last few years, taking on jobs which are both skilled and unskilled (Times of Malta, 2017). As of September, 2016, c. 25,000 EU nationals and c. 9,000 third country nationals were working in Malta (The Malta Independent, 2017). Since a large number of these workers typically stay in Malta for just a temporary period, unless more workers are attracted on a regular basis, an increase in labour shortages

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international qualifications as well as prospective qualifications; (5) validation of informal and non-formal learning; (6) research and policy recommendation on issues related to further and higher education.

could occur. In fact, data from Jobsplus (Malta's PES) suggests that a higher number of workers is required to meet labour force demand (Times of Malta, 2017).

Lastly, one of the main findings which emerged from this research is that although most respondents (94.6%) believe that there should be more collaboration between employers and educational institutions, a relatively small percentage of employers (19.3%) do in fact engage in such collaboration. Reasons put forward by the respondents for such limited collaboration included a lack of proper structures in place to facilitate such collaboration (21%) and that employers lack the required resources to engage with educational institutions (18.7%) (NCFHE, 2016).

Key Features of the Education System

Compulsory education starts from when children are 5 years of age and ends when children reach 16 years of age. Although State schools offer free education, parents may also choose to educate their children either at a Church school or a private independent school. While Church schools do not charge tuition fees (although parents typically make a donation), private independent schools charge tuition fees. Approximately 39% of students following primary level and secondary level education are enrolled in private independent schools (EC, 2014).

Specifically with regards to the state educational system, since 2005, State College networks have been set up and at present there are 10 State College Networks, each comprising of a number of schools at primary and secondary level. Each college has a College Principal responsible for the network and individual schools have their own Head of School and staff (EC, 2014).

Following the end of compulsory education, students may follow a general educational path, either at the Junior College, Giovanni Curmi Higher Secondary School (GCHSS) or at a number of private sixth forms, or else follow a VET programme at one of the main providers, viz. the Institute of Tourism Studies (ITS) and the Malta College of Arts, Science and Technology (MCAST) (EC, 2014).

The University of Malta (UoM) provides tertiary general education courses ranging from certificate and under-graduate level to doctoral level. Moreover, tertiary vocational education is offered by MCAST's University College. Plans are in the pipeline for the ITS to launch degree courses. Private institutions also offer a range of post-secondary and tertiary education against a fee (EC, 2014).

Romania

The global economic crisis has affected Romania as well as other EU countries. Unemployment has dramatically shrunk in the years immediately following the crisis. The last few years have brought a slight increase in the Romanian economy after the economic crisis. Also, the political instability of recent years has affected the economic recovery of the country. The economic sector is trying to grow but this is an insufficient effort to make Romania a country of welfare.

Under these circumstances, many sectors such as education, health and social care suffer. The Romanian government has understood that education can improve the country's economic situation, however the value of GDP allocated to education is very low with important effects.

The nongovernmental sector seeks to support education and the elimination or decrease the rate of school dropout: Also, in recent years, an increased attention has been focused to vocational and technical education by re-introducing vocational/vocational schools in educational system. The Romanian educational system has understood that it necessary to train future specialists that can easily adapt to social and technological changes of the new world. Because many future jobs could be automated, the abilities of young people will have to be changed in the sense of their digitization. However, there is a mismatch between young people's career aspirations and the reality of Romanian job market.

Romania is known as a labour force provider country for many developed countries in the EU and also all over the world: Romanian engineers are among the best world IT specialists. Also, the Romanian government is worried about the departure of Romanian doctors, well trained in the Romanian universities. Many construction specialists leave the country searching for better jobs abroad. Many Romanian children grow up without having parents close to them because of the large number of people leaving the country looking for a job.

Technology is not present in all Romanian schools especially in rural areas. In recent years, ICT has been introduced in school curriculum as a curriculum subject, mandatory for the first year of gymnasium. It is also a special subject in high schools, in Mathematical/Informatics specialisation. However, most Romanian schools have performing computers or functional ICT laboratories. Despite the government's efforts, statistics shows that in 2016, 140000 children in Romania were at risk of dropping out of school.[7]

In 2012, 52.2% of Romanian children were at risk of poverty or social exclusion, the highest percentage since the accession of Romania to the European Union and almost double then the European average.

According to other European statistics, for example Eurostat, in 2013, 48.5% of children in Romania were at risk of poverty or social exclusion, with the average in the EU Member States being only 27.7%. Early school dropout rate of 17.3% in 2013 places Romania among the 4 European countries with the highest percentage in this area, according to the same source, Eurostat. In Romania, the dropout rate is 19.1% (Eurostat), and should be reduced to 11.3% by 2020. As a result, Romania as a member of the European Union must develop valid strategies for identifying, motivating and the bringing to school of children at risk of dropping out of school or school failure.

[7] www.salvaticopiii.ro, Save the Children Romania

Social Mobility

Social mobility emerges not only as an effect of evolution, but also as an indispensable framework for any evolution in the social space, since the organization requires permanent creation of structures and their rearrangement according to certain momentary or perspective requirements. Social mobility is a very complex social phenomenon and a different content from one stage to another of a country's socio-economic development. Even though the interest in social mobility problems today seems lower than three decades ago, the phenomenon is still a problem area of primary importance. There are two ways to study social mobility. First, we can examine the careers of individuals - the degree to which they move up and down the social ladder during their lifetime as employees. This is called intra-generational mobility. Mobility from one generation to the next is called inter-generational mobility.

The experience accumulated by sociologists in Romania justifies the approach of changes in the social structure from the perspective of the following three types of indicators: professional and/ or occupational mobility; marginalization or social exclusion; integration or participation in the development of the market economy and poverty. With all the achievements, and in Western societies, many people live in poverty. How should poverty be called? A distinction is usually made between subsistence or absolute poverty and relative poverty. Charles Booth was one of the earliest researchers who tried to establish a consistent standard of poverty, which refers to the lack of the necessary basic conditions to sustain a healthy physical existence- sufficient food and shelter to enable efficient body functioning. Some general influences on the level of poverty have been well established.

Socially well-designed and managed social care programs, coupled with government policy that actively support the control of unemployment, reduce poverty levels. There are certain societies- such as Sweden- where the level of poverty, the limit of subsistence have been almost completely abolished.

Many people in modern societies believe that everyone can get to the top if they work hard and are striking enough, and yet the figures show that very few succeed. Why is this so difficult? In a certain way the answer is very simple. Even in a "perfectly fluid" society, where everyone would have an equal chance of reaching the highest positions, only a minor part will do so. The top socio-economic order has the shape of a pyramid, with relatively few positions of power, status, or wealth. No more than two or three thousand people, out of a total population of 58 million in the UK, could become directors of one of the two hundred large corporations.[8]

But, moreover, those who hold positions of wealth and power are given more opportunities to perpetuate the advantages of passing on to their children. They can make them have the best

[8] https://dreptmd.wordpress.com/cursuri-universitare/sociologie-juridica/cursul-nr-6-stratificare-si-mobilitate-sociala/

possible education, and this will often bring them good jobs. Even if they pay taxes on wealth and inheritance, the rich have found ways to convey a great deal of their property to the descendants. Most of those who get to the top benefit from the beginning- they come from professional or rich backgrounds.[9]

It is difficult to calculate the degree of social mobility (movement of people within or between social strata resulting in a change in social status) in an economically instable country with fluctuations of the national currency and with tax and imposition variations imposed by the government. There is a labour mobility beyond the borders of the country. An important part of Romanian labour forces, whether specialized or not, activate in countries such as Italy, Spain, Greece, Israel, Germany, UK. The main motivation for this mobility is the lack of jobs in Romania, low wages and insufficient social assistance for jobseekers in the country. Also, career guidance seems to be not sufficiently developed, especially for adults who are looking for a job for a long time. So, the young adult seems to have many financial resources than their parents.

On the other hand, the Romanian population is experiencing a demographic decline being older and older.[10] Many studies shows that in future years the social assistance system will not be able to provide pensions/financial resources for people leaving the labour force, due to the large number of pensioners and a smaller number of active people. National Institute of Statistics shows that in recent years Romanian population suffered a decline in financial resources. (INS, Eurostat) Statistical data (INS) showed at the end of 2015 that in Romania 2.5 million people were at risk of poverty and 150000 people live in severe poverty conditions. The heaviest situation is in rural areas.[11]

The risk of social exclusion in Romania is high. Romania has the highest *relative poverty* rate- 24.5% being the first in the EU, ahead of Spain- 22% and Bulgaria- 21%. However, between 2008- 2014 (Eurostat), Romania has made progress in this field being active in developing measures to eradicate poverty and social exclusion.[12]

Also, the Romanian government is making efforts to integrate the Roma population. Many Roma families have adapted their lifestyle to the current modern cultural and social environment *(a positive social mobility*), but other Roma families want to preserve the Romani traditions. These aspects make in some regions the Roma population not to advance socially but to remain at a low socio-cultural level.

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[9] Giddens Anthony, 2000

[10] www.insse.ro, INS, National Institute of Statistics

[11] www.worldvision.ro

[12] https://www.agerpres.ro/economie/2015/10/27/ins-romania-primul-loc-in-ue-privind-rata-saraciei-relative-12-24-19

The Skills Agenda

The National Agency for Employment of Romania[13] is the institution with the role of managing the ratio of employees and jobs on the Romanian labour market. It also deals with retraining people, as well as those who want to change their careers or those who have not found a job according to their aspirations.

The state educational system remains the institution that firstly builds skills for young people in order to cope with work field. In fact, there is a permanent partnership between work field and the educational system in order to build an individual professional profile and also a properly educational skills framework, useful on the current and future labour market.

The last years have brought an increase of the social and emotional abilities of young Romanians learners in schools by introducing in the curriculum Counselling and guidance. The children in the education system gets better and better social and emotional abilities that help them adapting to inter-human relationships and on the labour market world.

Also, in Romania, since 2015- ICT is compulsory for first year of secondary schools students.[14]

Computer skills are increasingly stable for young Romanians.

Recent studies show a low interest among young people to embrace occupations in health and educational field and more in sectors such as economics, law, foreign languages, new technology/IT, engineering and robotics.

Entrepreneurial skills are also becoming more developed for young Romanians, due to optional or compulsory courses/subjects in the Romanian education system.

Children in Romania usually learn at least two foreign languages in school, and these skills help them adapt to the labour market in other countries, especially the EU. Unfortunately, Romanian jobs are not many, well paid and attractive for Romanian specialists to work there.

However, there are children from rural or disadvantaged areas in Romania who do not yet have access to education.

The new Skills Agenda for Europe, adopted by the Commission on 10 June 2016, launched 10 actions to make the right training, skills and support available to people in the European Union. The goals and actions on the Agenda are set out in Communication: A New Skills

[13] www.anofm.ro

[14] http://digitalagenda.ro/

Agenda for Europe- Working together to strengthen human capital, employability and competitiveness. The 10 actions are designed to:

- improve the quality and relevance of training and other ways of acquiring skills
- make skills more visible and comparable
- improve information and understanding of trends and patterns in demands for skills and jobs (skills intelligence) to enable people make better career choices, find quality jobs and improve their life chances.

The Commission is continuing to take forward each of the 10 actions. It calls on EU countries, employers' associations, trade unions, industry and other interested parties to continue to work together to ensure that these initiatives produce the best possible outcomes.[15]

The Council adopted the 'Up skilling Pathways: New Opportunities for Adults' Recommendation in December 2016. The Commission is now working with EU countries and other interested parties to implement the Recommendation, helping low-skilled adults acquire a minimum level of literacy, numeracy and digital skills and/or acquire a broader set of skills by progressing towards an upper secondary qualification or equivalent.

The Council adopted the revised European Qualifications Framework and the related annexes in May 2017. The Commission is now working with EU countries and other interested parties to implement the new Recommendation so as to support better understanding of qualifications and make better use of all available skills in the European labour market.

The 'Digital Skills and Jobs Coalition' to support cooperation among education, employment and industry stakeholders was launched in December 2016 with the goal of improving the digital skills of the wider population, not just IT professionals. EU countries are now working on developing national digital skills strategies by mid-2017. 17 national Digital Skills and Jobs Coalitions are already in place and 70 organizations have pledged action towards providing digital skills.

A first call under the 'Blueprint for Sectorial Cooperation on Skills' to improve skills intelligence and address skills shortages in specific economic sectors - automotive; defense; maritime technology; space/geo information; textile, leather clothing & footwear; and tourism – was launched in January 2017. Projects start in December 2017 and the next call will be launched before the end of 2017.

A 'Skills Profile Tool Kit for Third-Country Nationals' to support early identification of skills of asylum seekers, refugees and other migrants was launched at a stakeholders' conference in

[15] http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=1223&langId=en

June 2017. Further development and testing is under way in close consultation with EU countries and users. Full public release of the tool is expected in November 2017.

The Commission is continuing to work on a set of measures to support the modernization of vocational education and training (VET), in line with the policy priorities defined in the 2015 Riga Conclusions. A series of activities aim to make VET a first choice:

First European Vocational Skills Week (December 2016) with over 900 events organized to highlight opportunities for VET learners, Second European Vocational Skills Week (20-24 November 2017).

The Commission adopted a proposal to revise the Europass Decision in October 2016. The proposal is designed to ensure that the Europass Framework can offer people better and easier-to-use tools to present their skills and obtain useful real-time information on skills needs and trends which can help with career and learning choices. Discussions of the Decision proposal are under way with EU countries and with the European Parliament with a firm commitment by all to ensure Europass is fit for purpose and meets citizens' future needs.

A proposal for a Recommendation on Graduate Tracking is under discussion with EU countries. The goal is to improve understanding of graduates' performance after their education and training experiences.

A review of the Recommendation on Key Competences is under way to help more people acquire the core set of skills necessary to work and live in the 21st century. The review focuses on promoting entrepreneurial and innovation-oriented mind-sets and skills. The Commission expects to adopt a proposal for revision of the Recommendation in late 2017.

Work on analyzing and sharing of best practice to manage the movement of highly skilled or qualified people between countries ("brain flow") is in progress to identify policies and measures to better manage this phenomenon.

The European Commission has adopted its new Skills Agenda for Europe, which features the Key Competences Framework. We take a first look at its planned review and how it is relevant to school education. The education community are well aware that many European children lack adequate literacy, numeracy and digitals skills, putting them at risk of unemployment, poverty and social exclusion. They also know that young people want to work in jobs that match their talents and aspirations but that employers are seeking people not just with highly specialised skills but an entrepreneurial mind-set and broad set of competences.

Development Zones

There are not many areas of economic development in Romania. Current statistics are not stable in finding certain country's economic growth. The Romanian political system does not encourage enough young entrepreneurship, although at the declarative level, this is mentioned. Tax cuts do not support enough small and medium-sized businesses to grow, and statistics say most new start-ups disappear before the first 5 years of operation. Many young

people in Romania are oriented towards theoretical areas to complete higher education (faculties, universities) and fewer want to practice vocational jobs.

Digital economy and also IT companies seem to have a development advantage among companies established in recent years. Companies dealing with the tourism sector are growing more and more. Agro-tourism or tourist exploitation of the Danube Delta, the image of the castles of Transylvania attracts many tourists and develops small tourism businesses in those areas.

The big cities of the country such as Bucharest, Constanta, Iași, Cluj-Napoca have developed their portfolio of multinational companies operating in different fields, being development areas for the whole country. There are more jobs here. On the other hand, many former mining areas from Oltenia, Ardeal are declining, and many cities where factories and factories existed during the communist era suffer from a lack of jobs. Entrepreneurial skills have developed a lot in recent years in sectors such as commerce, tourism, transport and manufacturing.